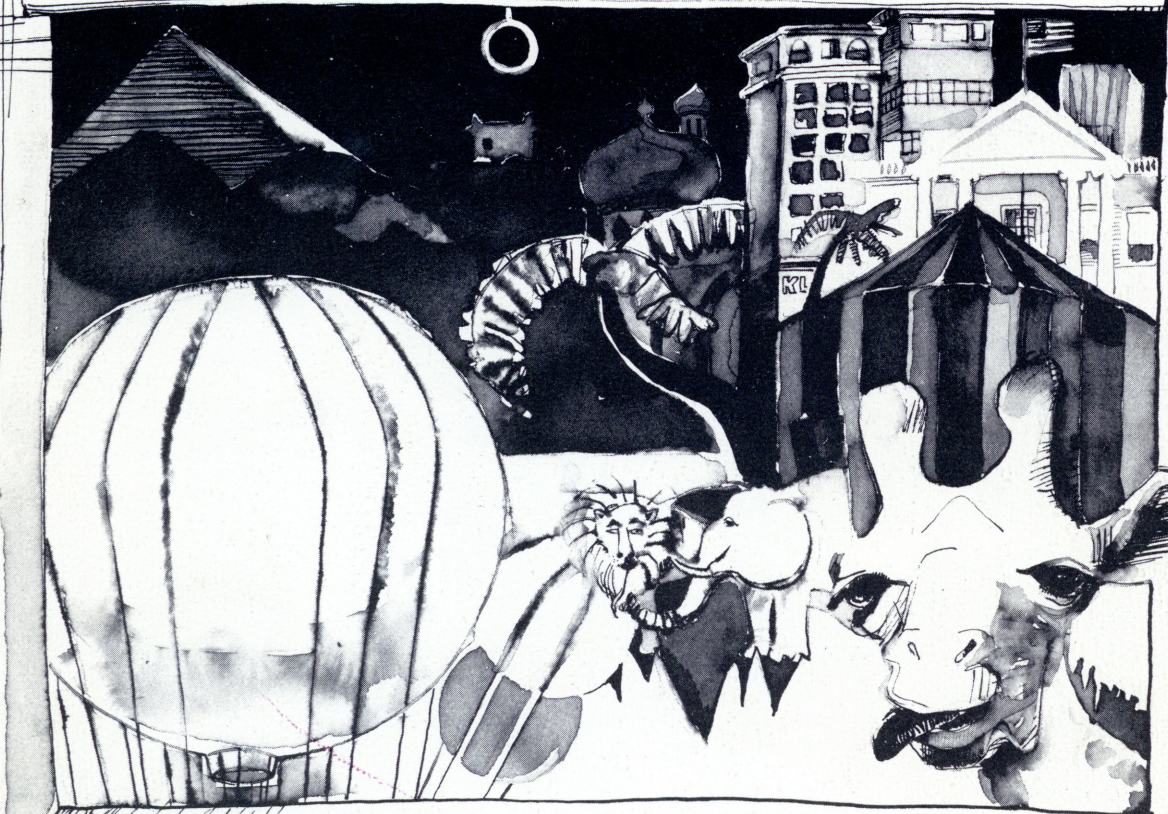


the Circle

Fall, 1977



the Circle

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cover illustration: Donna Young

Voluptuous Jere Andrews stars in the first "Circle-ation," which will become a regular *Circle* feature.

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- A Note On Style**
- The variety of approaches to writing and design in this issue reflects *The Circle's* function as a laboratory publication. Although each piece was reviewed by staff members and representatives of the Editorial Board, the appearance of any article, story, poem, drawing, or photograph does not necessarily indicate unanimous critical approval. All letters to the editor are welcomed.
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Scott and Zelda's Daughter

by Mala Paulk



Scottie Fitzgerald Smith is the kind of woman encountered in grocery stores and at malls, and, although she doesn't look even vaguely familiar, one cannot help glancing twice and wondering if she is not of the select breed who has run in the circles of the very famous. Indeed, her circle of well-knowns needs extend no further than her immediate family. Her father is F. Scott Fitzgerald, the Jazz Age writer who gave the world Jay Gatsby, Daisy Buchanan, Dick Diver, and many

others. He and his wife, the Alabama-born beauty Zelda, became the legendary couple reputed to have made the 1920's roar. Their daughter, Scottie, now fifty-six years old, a writer and former newspaper reporter, lives in Montgomery. She is a rather small woman with graying hair and an indistinguishable accent and emits an air of sophistication and good breeding tinged with a complete frankness:

"I'm always a great disappointment to people on the subject of

reminiscences because for some reason or other, perhaps because we moved around a lot, I really don't have the kind of childhood recollections I often envy in other people who seem to have total recall about everything that happened while they were little."

Sitting in a back room of her home, we drank tea sweetened with honey out of flower-adorned cups and saucers as we talked. It was a hypnotic, tranquil little room of cool greens and bright flowers and healthy plants that blend-

ed to give one a feeling of continuous springtime.

"I remember vividly books that I read and places I went, but I don't remember that much about my parents. Everything is confused in my mind as to what I remember and what I have read and pictures I've seen, so I don't really know the difference between what is the truth and what is my own memory. They have become legends more than real people. A lot of the stories and biographies of them are wild exaggerations, but that is to be expected with almost any famous people.

"I had an English nanny when I was little. They were very strict with children; they expected you to curtsy and go to bed early. You didn't eat with your parents, although I saw mine a great deal. I led a very sheltered life. I was never close to my parents by modern standards; close was not applicable in my case. I never did see them as children now see their parents, nor as I saw my own children.

"I always wished for a brother or sister so I wouldn't get so much attention! I think if I had been in a bigger family I would have brought up my children better. It's easier to raise children when you've been raised in a large family. I think only-children in some ways are very lucky, for they certainly have the undiluted love and attention of their parents, which is good in a way; but it is also awfully good to test your wings with others.

"Both parents were extremely good-looking people. I feel I got the worst features of both! I didn't get my father's beautiful blue eyes or my mother's gorgeous skin. I did inherit my father's great inability to handle money.

"My first memories of my parents would be in the south of France. We had a very pretty house with palm trees all around it on the Riviera and I do remember my mother painting in the garden. My father gave me a birthday party when I was five."

Scottie's most recent birthday had been the day preceding our interview, and intermittently she paused to complete last minute preparations for an outdoor birthday celebration to be staged that night.

"Do you like to give parties?" I asked.

"Of course," she said, dragging out another plastic cushion from the closet and carrying it to the patio. "Don't you?"

Comfortably seated, we resumed our conversation and tea.

"Did I feel they were different from other parents? I guess so, although it didn't worry me very much. The time we were living in France, the people that I saw were mostly writers and ar-



tists and people who didn't go to work everyday and do the accustomed things. I guess I became more aware of it when we lived in Baltimore; everybody else's parents seemed to go to work in the mornings. My father was always at home writing.

"My father was basically one of the most generous people I've ever known. He really did care about others and was awfully kindly and protective to others when he wasn't drinking. He was such an extraordinary combination because when he drank, he became very belligerent and seemed to have gotten into fights with just about everybody, which he felt badly about afterwards. But I don't think it was intentional; I don't think he ever hurt someone's feelings intentionally in his entire life.

"I guess you'd just have to call him a regular old nag. He did demand perfection in me as far as school work went. He used to drive me absolutely crazy because he insisted upon picking out courses for me and telling me what to read and following everything I did so carefully. I found this very annoying. I think most people would, even today, having someone overseeing every moment of your education. You just want to be on your own. You don't want to have someone watching over your shoulder. Unfortunately, his nagging didn't do much good; I was going to do what I wanted to do anyway.

"When I was in college, my father was not really well known then. It is very strange, but I think he was rather disliked by the English teachers. They thought he was a trashy writer, just a popular writer, not a good writer. I didn't worry about things like that. The

idea of his being a great writer simply never occurred to me. I just knew he was a writer; I never discussed it with him.

"I didn't take much English in college, actually because my father didn't want me to. He wrote in one of his letters that anybody who can't read modern literature themselves didn't have any business pretending to be a scholar.

About football. . .

"From there to the goal line was easy running, and as Reade laid the pigskin on the ground and rolled happily over beside it he could just hear another slogan echo down the field: 'One point—two points—three points—four points—five points. Reade! Reade! Reade!'"

—"Reade, Substitute Right Half"

"Once my father made me stand on the edge of a diving board in France until I finally got my courage and dove off. He wanted me to be good in sports.

"He was always sorry he couldn't be a football player. We had a next-door neighbor named Andrew Turnbull who subsequently became his biographer. Andrew was a year older than I, and when we were about thirteen and fourteen, Daddy would do a lot of football plays with Andrew, explaining the plays of the quarterbacks he admired. It bored me stiff and I didn't pay any attention to them. He loved talking to Andrew about football. My father did take me once to a Princeton game, and I swallowed a safety pin. He spent the entire game, being a father, worrying about that safety pin. That was my day at Princeton!

About being rich. . .

"That was always my experience—a poor boy in a rich town; a poor boy in a rich boy's school; a poor boy in a rich man's club at Princeton. . . However, I have never been able to forgive the rich for being rich, and it has colored my entire life and works."

—FSF to Anne Ober, March 1938.

"Money was certainly an obsession with him—there was no question of that. He could never hang onto it. No matter how much he made, he was always broke. I think he was fascinated by the rich, as he proved by writing about them. Most people he knew we would certainly have to consider well-off. He had a mixed love-hate

feeling about the rich—he was fascinated by them, but at the same time had a contempt for the values that they had. I think we all have this mixture of feelings—we're attracted by the glamour and beautiful patterns that they can make of their lives and at the same time we wish they would do more for the good of the rest of the world.

"I don't think money was that big an issue with my mother, although her family was almost penniless. That is probably one reason why she was very certain that my father would be able to support her before she would marry him. In these days, I would think a woman could figure she could support herself and not worry quite so much.

About Zelda's lust for life—

"Thoroughbred!" she thought, "meaning that I never let them down on the possibilities of a scene—I give them a damned good show."

—Save Me the Waltz (ZF)

"My mother's greatest attribute was her *vivre* [zest for living]. She thoroughly enjoyed everything she did. She adored dancing, adored painting, and loved making paper dolls. Everything she did was a source of joy to her until she got sick. She painted the furniture—we had wonderful garden chairs with maps painted on them and stars, another with red and white stripes. She was forever decorating things. She had a great capacity for enjoyment.

"Daddy wrote about his youth in the Basil stories, and my mother touched on her youth in *Save Me the Waltz*, but they never really talked about their youth. I used to come to visit my grandmother in Montgomery, and I certainly was aware that my mother had been special in the town before she married. I know she dated some at Auburn. I asked a great friend of hers where my mother went most in those days. They all seemed to have divided their time pretty equally between Auburn and the University of Alabama.

"My mother was awfully sick from the time I was about eleven years old. She was in and out of the hospital. I came to see her about twice a year to Alabama, but being with her was always a strain. She was always very tense. People who are mentally ill are difficult to be with. She got very religious in her late years and talked about the Bible a lot and had some very weird notions about God. I tried to get her off that subject as much as possible. I really felt as if I was just visiting a



sick person, although she could still be great fun. When she was at her best, she was still very witty and very charming.

"She [Zelda] adored her mother and greatly admired her dancing teacher in Paris. Her mother had tried to go on stage in Philadelphia as she had been at school there. I think one of the drama coaches was one of the Barrymores, although I've never been clear about it. They took an interest in her and offered her a part in a play. I guess she was about eighteen or nineteen. Her father went all the way from Kentucky on a train to bring her back because ladies were not supposed to go on stage. I think she brought some of that attitude with her in the raising of her daughters. I think that was indicative of the attitudes of the time—that women were not expected to do anything professionally except teach which was the respectable profession.

"It was a shame in the case of my mother. I really do believe had she been a professional dancer, which was clearly her greatest bent, a lot of her troubles would not have arisen. She would have been able to express herself so thoroughly in movement. My father thought she overdid her dancing. She practiced twelve, fourteen hours a day. It was a contributing factor to her illness. Of course, I don't know what comes first—the chicken or the egg in something like that; it was probably more of a symptom than a cause. When we lived in Delaware, she had a big mirror and a ballet barre, and she would dance in the afternoons, usually to something called "The Dance of the Hours." At one point, she wanted me to be a dancer, but my father nixed that.

He thought it was a terrible idea. I never took to it particularly.

"I think my mother wanted to find an identity of her own. I think she got awfully frustrated always being the wife and doing virtually nothing. There was nothing to do except keep house—she was not a very good housekeeper, and she didn't have to cook. I think she was bored and had lost a sense of identity, but I don't subscribe to the theory that she competed against my father. I could be wrong about that. She loved him very much, but I suppose it was a source of great frustration to have his stories appear with quotes from her and heroines based on her. She got the feeling that 'if someone else can do it, why can't I do it myself?'

About Zelda's illness and his love for her...

"For what she has really suffered, there is never a sober night that I do not pay a stark tribute of an hour to her in the darkness. In an odd way, perhaps incredible to you, she was always my child (it was not reciprocal as it often is in marriages), my child in a sense that Scottie isn't, because I've brought Scottie up hard as nails (perhaps that's fatuous, but I think I have). Outside of the realm of what you called Zelda's "terribly dangerous secret thoughts" I was her great reality, often the only liaison agent who could make the world tangible to her—"

—FSF to Sara and Gerald Murphy, c. March 1936.

"My father loved the South, wrote some marvelous stories about the South; and most of his great heroines came from the South, but I cannot picture him settling here. Now quite possibly, if my mother had married a boy she knew from Montgomery, and had stayed there, her life might have been less tragic. I don't think her childhood or education prepared her for the things she encountered in the North or in Europe.

"All the famous literary figures of the time seemed to have gathered on the Riviera, but I don't remember them. I do remember playing with their children on the beaches. I wish I could live my life over again and take notes every time one came by. To me, they were just old people, friends of my parents, not anybody special.

"I remember Gertrude Stein came once to our apartment in Baltimore for tea. She was a very large, formidable, and frightening presence, and I really

didn't want to sit down and join them, nor was I invited.

"I don't remember meeting Ernest Hemingway, but I do remember meeting his son, Bumbee, when we were living in Delaware in 1928. In those days, the big thing was when touring companies would come through with plays.

"Evio Gallion arrived with *Romeo and Juliet* in Philadelphia. Bumbee came to spend the night for some reason, and Daddy took him and me to see *Romeo and Juliet*. Right at the climax of Evio Gallion's balcony scene, Bumbee, who was a year younger than me, about six or seven, stood up and screamed at the top of his lungs: 'I want to get an ice cream cone and go home!' The whole house absolutely howled; it was so embarrassing! I remember my father going backstage and apologizing to Evio Gallion afterwards.

"Hemingway turned on my father and was rather a worm about it. I think he's pretty much been proven to be a real egomaniac and a very complicated, neurotic person. I think he deeply resented my father's rather puppy-dog way of trying to help him.

"Please lay off me in print. If I choose to write de profundis sometimes it doesn't mean I want friends praying aloud over my corpse."

—FSF to Hemingway,
August 1936.

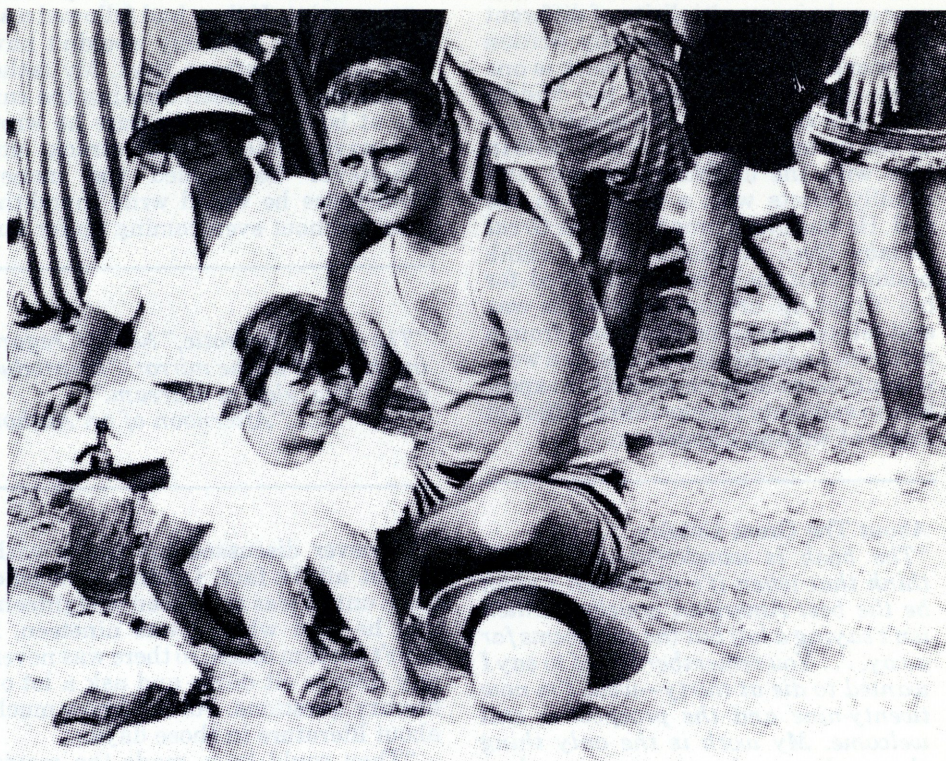
My father was forever helping people and rewriting their stuff and giving them advice and very often people don't like that. I think Hemingway resented that he had been helped.

About being rich. . .

"The man with the jingle of money in his pockets who married the girl a year later would always cherish an abiding distrust, an animosity, toward the leisure class—not the conviction of a revolutionist but the smouldering hatred of a peasant."

—*"Pasting It Together"*

"I've learned since that a great many people resented that my father wrote just about the rich. A lot of people in this country were struggling in the Twenties and they were leading a Jazz-Age life. They weren't going to parties and dancing the Charleston and drinking in speak-easies, and they resented this sort of life that other people were leading. I don't blame them at all. I



quite understand their point of view. I think that my father's works fell into disrepute for a time. People unconsciously blame the troubles of the country on the Twenties. They were right—the Twenties certainly were responsible for a lot of our troubles later.

"My father's works declined in popularity, not because people didn't want to dwell on the past. I think that the questions Daddy addressed, which were, after all, the life of the rich in Europe, were no longer relevant. Americans were no longer in Europe when the crash came. He had been away too long from America; he was out of touch with his own generation. People became more interested in the other type of people here, such as the migrant workers.

"The problem then was more within my father than within the public. . . His material wore out although he had confidence that he was still a very good writer. He burned himself out awfully

About difficulties in writing in later years:

"It grows harder to write, because there is much less weather than when I was a boy and practically no men and women at all."

—*"The Note-Books"*

young, particularly the way many poets do. He said his writing was of a poetic nature. He was only thirty when he wrote *The Great Gatsby*. So you see, everything was downhill for him after that. When my father knew he was in one of his bottom low ebbs, he generally didn't have me around.

"I've often heard that most writers have one real story to tell, and once



they have told it, they tell it over and over again in a multiplicity of different ways. My father had already written his story. The whole of his work is one story—the poor boy from the Middle West who comes East and is entranced by the glamour and glitter of it, falls in love with the unobtainable girl, and usually meets with a disaster in the end. He was much prouder of *The Great Gatsby* than anything else. I think besides that, he'll be remembered for his 'Crack-up' articles because he was still telling the same story, but from a different angle in his own life. In a way, it would have been impossible to expect him to suddenly plunge into a different angle of writing altogether.

About *The Great Gatsby*...

"The book is wonderful—I honestly think that when it's published I shall be the best American novelist (which isn't saying a lot) but the end seems far away. . . . You remember I used to say I wanted to die at thirty—well, I'm now twenty-nine and the prospect is still welcome. My work is the only thing that makes me happy—except to be a little tight—and for those two indulgences I pay a big price in mental and physical hangovers."

—FSF to Maxwell Perkins, 27 Dec. 1925



Photographs reprinted from *The Romantic Egoist* by permission of Scottie Fitzgerald Smith, and Charles Scribner and Sons, publishers.

"Discipline was not my parents' strong point. If they had followed a set pattern, they probably wouldn't have had such disastrous lives. My father would not have been burning the candle at both ends. I am sure he wrote whenever the mood struck and whenever he needed the money. Sometimes he would write round-the-clock without even coming up for air.

"The perfect neurotic," he said, regarding himself in the mirror. "By-product of an idea, slag of a dream."

—*"Afternoon of an Author"*

"I never discussed his books with him at all. In fact, I didn't even read them until I was seventeen or eighteen, and he died when I was nineteen. I didn't see him much, so there was never any time to sit down and ask a lot of literary questions. I didn't know much about literature in those days.

"They could have made the movie version of *The Great Gatsby* one of the greatest films of all times. They almost did, and then they ruined it. It was typical Hollywood—miscast and too long. Cybil Shepherd should have been Daisy. I think my father would not have been pleased at all. He would have thought it a shame, just a waste of time.

"My father was so representative of an era, and such an important era! Aside from how good the individual writing might be, he will definitely continue to be read as a symbol of the age. Nobody had ever written about the young and their preoccupations and problems in a new age, an age different from any other age before. He found a way to do it in his very poetic style. He was a complete original."

She walked me to my car that afternoon, taking me through the back gate to show me the pile of bricks she had salvaged from her mother's childhood home before it was torn down. We talked about needlepoint and typewriters, and then she smiled the smile of someone cordial and confident.

"Good-bye."

An Afternoon in Chambers County

Away from the freshly tarred city streets and apartment neighbors who complain of low water pressure is the country. Here, after traveling a maze of red clay roads, you can spend a Sunday afternoon quite contentedly, and quite simply, with new friends on their front porch.

It is a long, deep porch supported by wooden columns set in sturdy flatrock foundations. Most of the exposed woodwork is warped and grey, its weather stain recalling years of dryness, frost, and storm. A dried golden-rod hangs from one column, and near another two displaced coconuts swing and bump in the temperate Alabama breeze. Above the screen door a somberly-robed spider meditates, awaiting parishioners to enter its cathedral of web. A bamboo fly rod, its reel rusted almost into uselessness, hangs farther along the rough wall.

Seated below the rod on a torn vinyl couch, a bespectacled, quiet man leisurely strokes first his young beard and then a wiry tabby kitten crouched upon his shoulder. Another kitten, slightly older, hides among the legs of the people sitting on the sagging church pew opposite the couch. The ferocious feline appears only occasionally to hiss at one of the multitude of dogs lounging on the porch. Henry, a dog with a questionable background and a purple tongue, catches flies on cue. A boisterous black labrador bumps an unsteady table with its tail, threatening to upset empty and half-filled beer bottles as well as an adventurous praying mantis which is scaling the foamy-throated mountains. Another lab, just a puppy but as round as the hanging coconuts, lolls between his master's mosquito-bitten legs. The puppy's master rests his bird's nest beard upon his chest to stare contentedly past the dog and the porch toward a sagging wire fence masked with honeysuckle.

Though it is late into the season, the vine's opened blossoms perfume the airy clearing surrounding the porch. The sun, blanketed all day above rain and thunder and lightning, awakes momentarily and pushes aside the dull sheets of clouds to illuminate the clearing. A cool breeze travels in from the northeast, and overhead the oak leaves, aged and dried, shiver, crackling and rustling, as if in nervous anticipation of autumn's chill and their season's end.

by Mark Willis



A WALK ALONG THE PIER

FICTION by Richard Schneider

Beneath the pier, small-crested waves slapped against the uprights that supported the structure, and slivers of ice, formed from the mixture of spray and freezing wind, glazed the rotting wood. Above the pier, seagulls dove and climbed through the bitter cold air while hurling cries of hunger at the green sea and gray sky. And where the pier met the shore, a pile of browning evergreens, still clinging to strands of Christmas tinsel, was carelessly stacked on a bed of their own needles. It would be a week yet before a barge would arrive and men with brown gloves and orange hats would load them away to be burned. Beyond the pier, beyond the dirty gray sand of the narrow beach, the harbor town showed signs of reawakening as the tiny white milk truck clinked and crawled through the shadowy, frozen dawn.

Avery lay still for one long moment, his milky blue eyes wide open, and

listened to the groaning gears of the milk truck. He heard it move off and looked over at Margaret. She was breathing with a steady, grinding snore. A few strands of white hair rose and fell back upon her lips as she breathed. He rose, pushing his gray hair off his forehead, and moved to the bedroom window. Pushing the torn white curtain aside, he wiped a porthole on the frosted window and peered out. The milk truck, harbinger of a new day, was still in sight. Avery could see the tailpipe spurting hot air which the hungry cold quickly devoured as the milk truck coughed again.

A black and red flannel robe lay draped over Avery's security guard uniform. He put it on slowly, bending and straining his arthritic joints until he was finally inside it. The mirror on the bedroom door held his reflection as he slowly knotted the bathrobe's sash. He

looked at himself momentarily and looked away shaking his head. There was no real emotion in that action. His eyes were filled with resignation. He was once a tall man but was now bent over with seventy-six years of existence. His fingers were gnarled and appeared inflexible. He was thin and his hairless skin, though sagging in his face and arms, was wrapped tightly around his weary frame. But his face did not display the ravages of aging as much as did the rest of his body, for there always seemed to be a hidden energy in his expression. Although his eyes were full of resignation, they were still clear and his mouth was a tight grim line.

Avery looked down at his sleeping wife.

"You're an old girl, too," he said.

Margaret stirred. The white shock of hair fell and then rose violently. She

illustration by Cindy Skinner

opened her eyes and looked up at her husband.

"You want some breakfast before you go?"

"No," he answered.

"You always want breakfast before you go," she said sleepily.

"I have the day off," he said.

"Oh."

Margaret closed her eyes and fell back to sleep. Avery settled in the bedside chair and gazed at her. And then he let his mind wander. And his mind stalked slowly backwards in time to the days when it used to leap forward when he let it wander.

It is a strange and sad thing when nature reverses itself and parents outlive their children. Their one child had died six years before of cancer. Tom was fifty-two. He had been a fine novelist, one of the finest. Avery always wanted to write. But in all the twenty-five years he spent teaching literature he had only written ten poems. Ten blithering poems about . . . well, he could never really decide what they were about. He wrote on impulse. The impulses were very infrequent and he never understood them afterwards.



He reached into his bureau drawer and drew them out. His heart beat to read them again. He read them over and over. He always found wonder in the fact that they were his—his alone. He shook his head again in the same way he had earlier. He had not written in twenty-one years. Nothing of his own for twenty-one years.

Avery looked up from his poems and rested his eyes on the uniform. He looked at the clock on the bureau and noticed that it was seven-thirty. Mr.

Stonemeyer would be calling. And he smiled when he heard the phone rattling in the kitchen. Margaret stirred and shifted positions. Avery walked into the kitchen and closed the bedroom door behind him.

"Hello."

"Yeah, Avery, are you on your way?"

Mr. Stonemeyer asked.

"No, I can't make it today. Margaret's a bit sick."

"Come on, Avery; Charlie can't work this morning either. We need you."

"Then this little disease is spreading, Mr. Stonemeyer."

"What?"

"I really can't come in today. I'm sorry."

"Avery. See you in the morning," he sighed and hung up.

Avery went back into the bedroom. Margaret was sitting up in bed.

"You want some breakfast before you go?" she asked.

"I have the day off," he said slowly.

"Oh, yes." She smiled, remembering.

Out in the street, car engines were being warmed up for the long trip into the city. The paper boy glided by on his bicycle and Avery heard their paper thud against the front door.

"There's another paper, Margaret," he laughed.

"You and your silly newspapers. Towels would do as well. You know that pile is only cluttering up the only room we have to relax in."

"It won't anymore, Margaret," Avery said. For the first time that morning resignation was nowhere in his eyes.

"What?"

Avery left the bedroom to go get the paper. Margaret followed him with her eyes. She was a slight woman, with a headful of unorganized white hair. Her eyes were blue and her nose was aquiline and noble. She was once a relatively-accomplished actress but increasingly-frequent epileptic fits and losses of memory had ended her career twenty-five years ago. She remembered now that it broke Avery's heart to have it end like that. And then she thought about him going to get another paper. He's depressed again, she thought, he's bound to bring it up again. And then she remembered that she had promised to go along.

Avery came back into the bedroom smiling. She stared at him in disbelief. Avery caught the strange look in her eye.

"I have the day off," he smiled.

"Oh, yes." She shook her head.

Avery looked at his wife sympathetically.

"It's not your fault, Peg. We have put it off too long."

She looked into his eyes. They were clear and sparkling and resolved.

"It couldn't wait another year?"

"No, Peg; it has waited five years."

"Six," she smiled at him widely.

"It's not our fault," Avery said.

Tears came to Margaret's eyes, first slowly and then more rapidly. Avery looked away. He was thinking of the first time he saw Margaret have a convulsion on stage. Later, when he described it for her she looked as she did now. She looked like a slapped dog, a chopped tree, and a bombed village. Each one separately, each one together. Avery could not bear to look at her now or remember her then. A hard lump formed in his throat and he reached in the pocket of his robe for his cigarettes. He lit one and peered through the smoke at his wife. She gained her composure.

"You want some break. . . ." she stopped.

"Coffee," Avery said, giving her a trembling kiss on her forehead.

Margaret slipped into her robe and went into the kitchen. She lit the pilot on the gas stove and ran water into a battered kettle. Avery followed and lowered himself into a chair. He glanced at the kettle and the blue flame beneath it and let his mind wander again. This time it ran back to college. He remembered how blonde Margaret's hair was, how deeply blue her eyes were, how astonishingly seductive her figure was. He remembered Doctor Sullivan smiling at him. "You will make an impact, Mr. Wilson," he had said . . . smiling, "a most profound impact."

"You want sugar, dear?" Margaret cut the dream in pieces.

"Yes, lots of sugar, Margaret, lots. And milk, too, and in a cup, Margaret and . . ." Avery stopped suddenly.

He watched Margaret's face cloud with confusion.

"I'm sorry, Maggie," he said softly.

The nickname unsettled her.

"Maggie?"

"From college," Avery smiled.

"You live in that nostalgic brain of yours," she said.

The lucidity surprised Avery.

"Yes," he said vaguely.

She served the coffee to him and sat down across from him. He sipped at it and crushed his cigarette into an ashtray.

"I was rereading the poems again today," he said.

"Those are wonderful things."

"What would you call them, Margaret? Wonderful relics or wonderful remnants?"

"What's the difference?" she said. Avery gave her a long, narrow look. Then he smiled.

"Yes, I suppose you're right."

"No, I mean between relic and remnant." Avery ignored her and took another, longer sip of his coffee.

"Well," he said slowly, "I suppose we should take a walk first."

"Where?" Margaret asked.

"To the pier," he answered.

Wordlessly, they moved together from the table and went into the bedroom to dress. Avery put on some old brown pants and a flannel shirt. Margaret slipped a dress over her head and they both put on their warmest coats.

She buttoned her coat and moved toward Avery to button his collar. He embraced her slowly until her head rested on the bony hardness of his shoulder. They stood like that for a moment and Avery looked at the two of them in the mirror. He thought of graduation dances, weddings, and cast parties.

"Years go quickly," he said.

"Only lately, Avery,—just lately," Margaret said.

They parted and moved out of the bedroom, through the kitchen and out into the sitting room towards the door. Avery glanced at the piles of papers that lay against three of the four walls.

"Let's go," he said.

Margaret dropped his arm and rushed at a pile that lay near the front window.

"You think it's right?" she said quickly.

"Peg," Avery soothed her.

"You think it's right?" she said more loudly.

"Don't do this, Margaret."

She attacked the wall of newspapers, throwing them wildly, ripping one, hurling some, all in an enraged fashion. Avery watched her silently. Margaret was crying and breathing rapidly. Sharp, ugly, whistling sounds accompanied each quick breath. One paper flew across the small room and struck a framed portrait of their son. Margaret stopped and gasped and gasped again. Avery looked at her face. It looked *that* way. He wanted to fold her in his arms till she calmed down. He wanted to take her back into the bedroom and hold her till it was over. Margaret stood amidst strewn newsprint and shattered glass.

"Avery," she pleaded with him.

"I—we cannot wait another day," he said. He looked down into her eyes.

"I would like the world to stop spinning, Peg."

Margaret looked up at him. She glanced at the glass and paper at her feet.

"I suppose we should take a walk now," she smiled.

"Yes," Avery said.

"It will be colder by the water."

"Yes, it always is," she said nodding.

Together, they went out into the bitter morning. The wind was whistling through the trees and raising week-old snow into a fine powder. Margaret's ears brightened and soon began to throb.

"You picked a fine day for a walk."

They moved up Fifth Street towards the beach. Neither spoke much except to mention that it was terribly cold and that winters were growing colder and colder. It took twenty minutes to reach the beach and Avery's cheeks were blood red, as red as Margaret's ears. They strolled across the bridge and reached the pier. Margaret helped Avery climb on top of it. For a few minutes they stood silently at the foot of the pier, not talking, just looking. It was almost as if they were steadfastly eating away the horizon with their eyes, so solemn was the look in them, so serious were their mouths.

The water spread out flat and smooth from the pier. The seagulls still soared majestically with injured dignity. They screamed at the scarcity created by winter. They defied it with flight. The evergreen shed more needles, and bits of tinsel rode on the wind like telltales on a sailboat. Avery glanced at his wife.

"Who built this pier, I wonder?" he said.

Margaret stared out at the water.

"Remember how we loved to walk this pier when we were younger?"

Margaret didn't answer. She didn't shift her eyes.

"And we used to dive off the end of it."

Margaret looked at him.

"Yes, we did. We always did," she said, and then she smiled.

Avery looked at her. Her white hair was blowing in the wind. She looked wise and zany. Her face was red and fresh. All the blood in her body must have risen to the surface. Avery looked out across the water. He didn't look into Margaret's eyes.

"What would you call the biggest shame?" he asked.

"Tommy," she said.

Avery nodded.

"And the greatest joy?"

"Tommy," she said.

Avery looked at her. She was trying to cry, but the cold wind stopped the tears on the surface of her eyelids.

"And you, my . . . my love," she said determinedly.

"The same," he said vaguely.

They began to walk the length of the pier. Avery took her hand.

"Really, the same, Avery?" she asked.

"No, not altogether," he said.

"What then?" she offered.

"Intelligence," he said sadly.

They reached the end of the pier. Both of them looked out over the water. It stretched as far as they could see. Avery felt Margaret's hand trembling in his grasp. He felt the lump rising.

"All you have to do is go to sleep," he said, "I'll take care of everything."

"Avery," she turned her glazed eyes upon him.

"No," he said softly.

"You will come to bed, then?" she asked.

"Yes, Peg."

"And you will hold me?"

"Always, Peg," the first tear formed and fell from his eye.

The smooth surface of the water was like a screen for Avery's mind. On it, he saw the milk truck scurrying back and forth in front of his house. In the wind he heard Tom's first scream. And in the air, he smelled the fresh pine scent of another December.

"Avery," Margaret said softly.

"Yes, my love?"

"Wouldn't you like to believe in God?"

The seagulls climbed and plummeted. And the smooth water deceptively formed a wave and slapped the pier softly. Avery gave Margaret a long look and kissed her on the lips.

"Yes," he whispered, "I would love to."

THIS HOUSE AT NIGHT

One a.m. arrives each night
This house and I are the only ones
Who cannot sleep.
Our conversation is limited.
The house monopolizes the talk.
Explosions of silence are the words
It uses to persuade me to sleep.
Does it thrive on being alone?
I thought for just one night
I'd keep her company.
Once again this house succeeds
In being the only one
Who cannot sleep.

—Anne Gilmore

HK

Quipping old movies
and ragging the token Jew,
sticking to patched brown corduroys
that hang too long in the crotch,
he saunters, resident clown
of ninth floor Haley Center,
waiting for Happy Hour
and juggling our homemade smiles.

—Martha Duggar

What have I done since your leaving?

WELL !!!

I've tried to read, but
the tears make the words
runtogether and
spot up my books.

I've been out with
a few others but
they are your effigy and
I feel lousy and
robot the evening

I've gone to bed early alone
(honest!) every night
but
you haunt my head
keeping me in sleepless limbo

I really haven't done much
since you left but
hope.

—Diana Huff

SONNET

WRITTEN AFTER FEELING NOTHING

Why do we need the temporary danger
Of flared-match television shows and thrills
That burn out, loved for hate's sake and stranger
Than love? I want to feel the thing that fills
Us to the brim and remains there to bubble
Evermore effervescent, permanent,
Orgasmically effusive, worth the trouble
It takes to put into words. Heaven sent,
Or heaven visited? My friend, if you
Can answer this fine question, forever
Will Keats' ideal be found in old and new,
In Grecian Urns and Harlem. And never
More will you prefer to laugh and pretend
To love this damned beginning of an end..

—Steve Glaze

drawing by Phil Green



Backstage with Kristofferson & Co.



Ken Taylor

Editor's Note: We tried agents, promoters, and record companies, but the response was the same: "Absolutely no interviews." So, with a small, expensive taping device hidden under his stage-crew coveralls, we set loose Circle reporter Ken Taylor backstage. Taylor relates a brush with Kristofferson: "I was sitting backstage and I could see him coming from his dressing room. He kept walking over, buttoning his shirt. He walked straight towards me and I thought 'Hotdam, I got me a story.' I was fidgeting with the tape player—I had it hidden in my coveralls. Just when I was about to click it on, he said, 'You wouldn't know where the band's dressing room is, would you?' I just pointed my arm and said 'Yeah, right over there.' Then he just disappeared into the bandroom. I turned to my friend Gary, who knew what I was doing: 'Do you think I could use that?'"

What is life like behind the gumdrop-colored lights, miles of electric cord, and mountains of speakers and amplifiers? Slip past the orange day-

glo vested ushers and barrel-bellied policemen in Auburn, Alabama to experience a night with Kris Kristofferson and company on tour.

Rita Coolidge is running around backstage asking for an ashtray. Hardly recognizable compared to her album and stage image, she looks at first like a groupie with her hair tied back, no makeup, jeans, and a faded blue T-shirt. A tall, bearded, lumberjack-looking fellow named "Cleav," the Kristoffersons' personal manager, is double-checking the agenda. Student stagehands are assisting the road crew, known as "roadies," putting Heineken on ice for the band. Three-year-old Casey Kristofferson is being assisted by her grandmother and babysitter, Mrs. Coolidge, in getting a drink of water.

Meanwhile, the promoter is filling out important contracts and sweating, and the coliseum manager is running around like an excited little boy with his walkie-talkie, making sure his toy soldiers are securing the entrances to his Moonpie Castle.

Beyond the noise and worry of backstage traffic, from a side corridor,

comes the pleasing sound of Kris Kristofferson and the six voices of his band rehearsing melodies not perfected in the afternoon's sound check. This peaceful flow, the common denominator seeming to unify the many diverse backstage activities into a cohesive effort, is reflected in the feelings of everyone with the tour toward Kristofferson. Terry Paul, the band's mustachioed little bass player, spoke glowingly of Kristofferson: "He's really great. The first three times he asked me to work with him I said no—turned him down. I was busy recording and didn't have time. He asked me a last time to tour with him for just three weeks, and I did. And now—seven years later—here I am."

Wizard technicians making idiosyncratic adjustments—flipping switches and turning knobs with lightning hands—slowed down a half a second or two to comment on Kristofferson's kindness on tour, and his generosity when each tour was finished, with bonuses for everyone.

"He's a really loose guy to work with and doesn't have a blown out head like 'Hey I'm a big rock star'" said one of the light crew as he walked across a row of lights, twenty feet above the stage, "Everything is loose."

As the coliseum fills up with students, alumni, fans, and legions of teeny-bopper autograph seekers, the performers are making ready in their dressing rooms. You are probably thinking: "Ah...this is when they take their 'Magic Medicines' to prime them for the show..." True, when the Gordon Lightfoot show came to town last year, the performers got so wasted that when it came time to go on stage they staggered from their dressing rooms. Buddy Rich and his band is another example. When the doors to the Greyhound opened for the band to disembark, they wandered out with half-closed bloodshot eyes and big smiles, going "Do-Bop-Boo-Whop" followed by a rolling cloud of herbal smoke. But not so with the Kristofferson tour. Coolidge is putting on her stage face and clothes, the band is downing Heineken and

Michelob and tossing out a couple to deserving stage hands, and Kristofferson is outside his door with opened black shirt, tuning his guitar and sipping a cool green liquid. Not swampwater, but a distant cousin—Gatorade. The twenty-year alcoholic has thrown the monster off his back and seems determined to keep him away. According to his mother-in-law:

"He took a good look at his life after he made *Star is Born* and he gave up drinking," said Mrs. Coolidge as she held Casey bouncing in her lap, "No wine, no booze, nothing."

In the movie Kristofferson played an alcoholic rock star whose career—and life—was waning fast. A band member



said Kristofferson also was having his problems.

Her daughter, Rita, rushed by seemingly unconscious of her mother's existence, and Mrs. Coolidge reflected for a moment on the past week's concert.

"They played last week at Florida State where Rita used to go to school... That's where she first became interested in music professionally," she said as she picked up Casey's toy. "She had sung in church choirs all her life since her father is a Baptist minister, but she started singing jingles at FSU for some extra money and got into it."

About this time Billy Swan informed the audience while he pounded his piano that if any of them had children that needed a paternal figure, he was offering help.

"You know my other son-in-law is producing his next album," she said, motioning to Billy Swan, "Do you know who he is? ... Have you ever heard of Booker T. of Booker T. and the M.G.'s?" she smiled.

The appearance of Kristofferson the performer and actor seems entirely

different from the one backstage. The big dynamic image we see on the cinema screen; the penetrating, rough voice we hear on his albums; the rumors, pictorials, and buildups we read in newspapers and magazines all seem to be filtered out by the back-drop curtain—a membrane separating the two worlds.

Playboy magazine ran a pictorial layout a few months ago featuring Kristofferson and British temptress Sarah Miles. The explicit sex scenes intended to summarize their movie *The Sailor That Fell From Grace With the Sea* supposedly caused trouble for the Kristofferson marriage. Rumor has it that they had terrible fights and were on the brink of divorce.

"... It was only a husband and wife spat," says an insider. "Rita reacted like any other wife would've. Kris had gotten drunk and the *Playboy* people released some scenes they weren't supposed to. They talked it over. No problem."

Kristofferson and Coolidge, like so many other performers, often are the subjects of stories about their apparent coldness to fans and their reluctance to sign autographs. One of the roadies named Ray tells their side:

"... Man you stop and give an autograph to one and —poof!—there's twenty of 'em. Kris and Rita almost got mobbed at a gig up north. People were trying to steal Rita's bracelet and Kris's chain. They're just people, but those people don't know that..."

So often, performers are glorified, even idolized, beyond even what their appetite for ego-gratification can handle. Outside the public life of stage, screen, glamor, and pressure, it's like the man said, "They're just people."



Entrapped in the Listening Room

Perhaps Fortuna would have it, perhaps, Weir. Nevertheless, it appears as though this evening I am to receive the pleasure of learning by heart Handel's "Water Music (complete)." I could be at the student concert with Lucy instead. But no, I was going to be studious and "bien culturee" as well. I would learn the first declension of Latin nouns while harmonious strings and horns uplifted my spirits. Indeed...

"A tempo di minuetto" is on for the third time now. I'll be turning the record over soon, undoubtedly. I thought about escaping through the ceiling (I remember "Mission Impossi-

ble"), or screaming calmly—I even tried to unlock the door with my new driver's license. Unfortunately the ceiling is too high, the walls are completely soundproof, and the University saw fit to buy the best damn locks in town. Merde.

That nice "Bouree: Allegro" just came on again. It doesn't help much anymore. Indeed it's time for sure. You're absolutely right... it's time I visited the W.C. (water closet)—how appropriate (water closet-Water Music)—aren't we funny.

I see a gleam of hope! Yes! An Arab's at the desk asking for some headphones. Great! Salvation draws near—I pray—oh, dear God, please... He gave her his I.D.—maybe he'll come in—she'll open the door.... She didn't. Encore une fois, merde.

So I wait. This situation ceases to amuse me. "Conserve me," I cry in despair. If I am to ever escape I must do more than Latin. (If Thurber can split his infinitives, so can I.) I must think. Hmmm.

Paranoia befriends me. Greetings, my friend. Welcome to the Handel Society. Another half hour has passed. At least they'll come in three hours to turn off the lights. Let's see now, fourteen minutes to each side, two sides, sixty minutes in an hour.... I will have heard "Water Music (complete)" eight times by then! But if they don't come to turn them off.... I think I'll go mad! Anyway, I shall soon be able to hum at least the first and second violin. Maybe next time I'll try French horn.

I have had enough. I SHALL ESCAPE! Well, idea #1 didn't work—undoing the door... Idea #2 (I hate it)—screaming, making loud noises and banging on walls.... no success....

One last hope! A "NO SMOKING" sign appears as if to signal prophetically my salvation. If I light a cigarette, someone will surely come to tell me to put it out. They always do. As the match flickers freedom's sweet fragrance draws closer.... It worked!... Incredible as it may seem! FREEDOM!

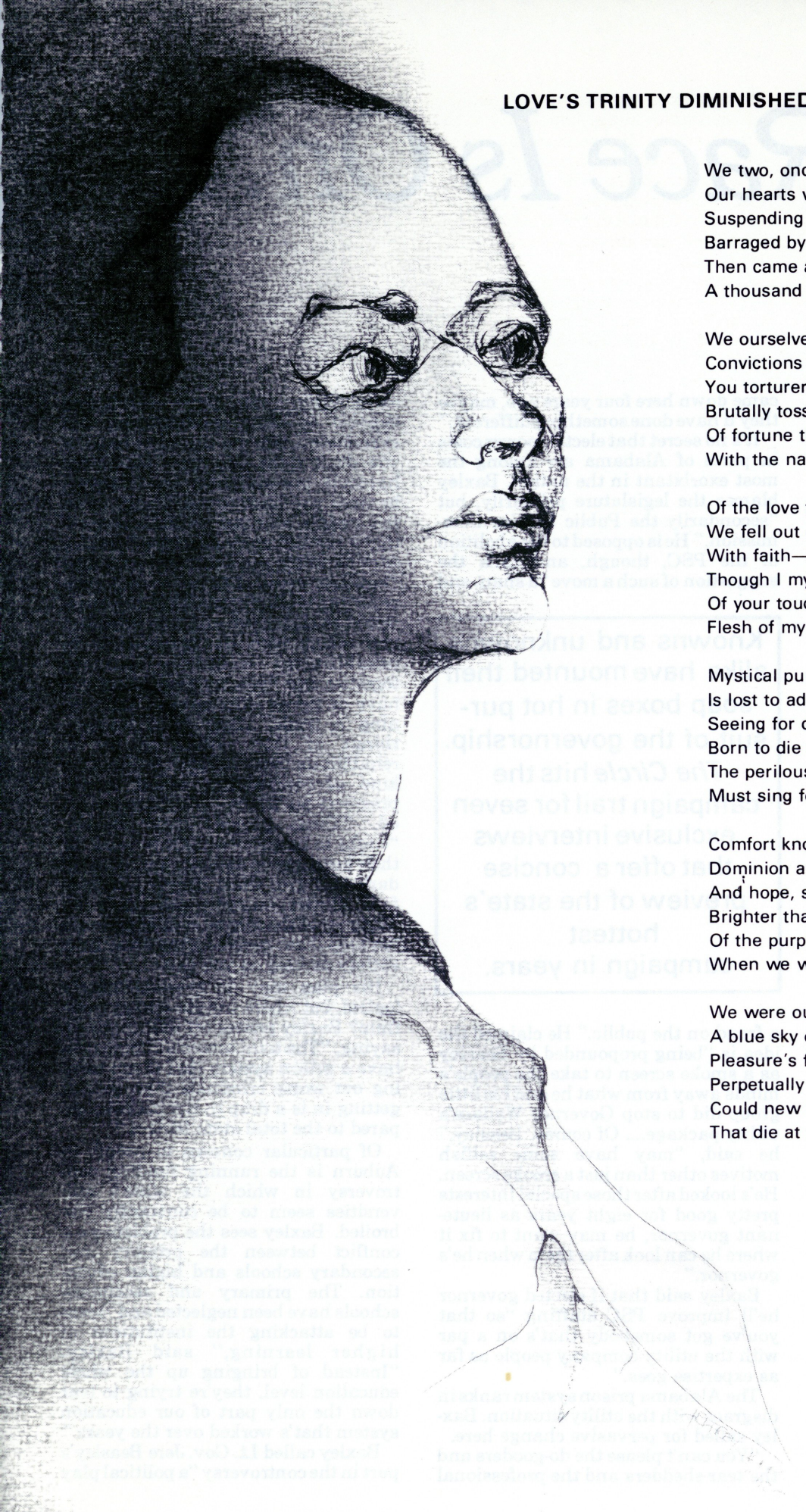
by Mary Susan Ray

BUFFALO

Buffalo so big and brown
You run around. O so proud
To be a buffalo so big
An' brown.

—Lynda Whetstone

LOVE'S TRINITY DIMINISHED IN HEARTS OF STERILE PASSION



We two, once lovers, are always loners.
Our hearts were happy in love's dream,
Suspending our windy minds carelessly
Barraged by endless seeming desire.
Then came a death, drowning innocence.
A thousand times we forgave ourselves.

We ourselves forgave time, a thousand
Convictions on flesh and fate, fate
You torturer, we stumble in wonder,
Brutally tossed by your pregnant sea
Of fortune that sickened our hearts
With the naked fear of false love.

Of the love false with naked fear,
We fell out of touch. I was hiding
With faith—faithlike forgotten magic,
Though I myself am not dreaming
Of your touch awakening remembering flesh
Flesh of my mystical heart of selfish purity.

Mystical purity of my heart of selfish flesh
Is lost to addicted eyes upon electric skies,
Seeing for desire countless throbbing tentacles,
Born to die as they wave toward woman space.
The perilous flesh blowing in the one-time spring
Must sing for comfort, knowing death.

Comfort knowing death must sing for
Dominion as a shrieking desert wind.
And hope, so simple, so intricate, burns
Brighter than the remembered sun
Of the purple evening of the sloping pines
When we were ours less in mind.

We were ours mindless when in
A blue sky of serene passion we loved.
Pleasure's flower is a timeless moment, yet
Perpetually we desire to conceive love's vision.
Could new blood flow in our vain hearts
That die at the bidding of the sterile wind?

—Percy Jones

The Race Is On...

BAXLEY

Bill Baxley, state Attorney General, says that virtually everything he plans to do as governor is predicated on reforming the state legislature. Most new legislators come to Montgomery as "honest" people; but then, he relates, a handful of individuals get to the new lawmakers and indoctrinate them so that when it's time to adopt procedural rules for the new legislative session, the newcomers have been swayed towards vested interests. The rules adopted then divert control to a small group that apparently has other motivations besides the welfare of the people.

The Circle, speaking to Baxley in his office in Montgomery, asked for identification of this handful of alleged dupes of special interests. "Recently it's been Beasley and the people he has working with him," said Baxley. "Before that it was Brewer."

We pressed further and asked who the guilty legislators were in the past session. "Beasley and his little clique in the Senate more than anybody else," was the reply.

We asked specifically for names and he finally listed the following: "Gilmore" (presumably state senator Eddie Hubert Gilmore of Bessemer); Oscar Ray Peedan, of Florence; and U.W. Clemon of Birmingham.

Baxley outlined his plan for revamping the legislature, thereby preventing "a small group of presiding officers like Beasley or Brewer or a few committee chairman from totally controlling the flow of legislation."

"Right after you get elected," said Baxley, "you'll have a brand new legislature. . . the great percentage of them new. The governor's got to go to work from the time he's elected, before they get here for the first session, and get commitments to change the procedural rules of the legislature."

Reiterating his belief that legislators are basically good, Baxley said, "There are a lot of good ones over there (in the capitol) now. If they knew what I'm gonna try to teach them before they

came down here four years ago, maybe they'd have done something different."

It's no secret that electric power costs in parts of Alabama are among the most exorbitant in the nation. Baxley blames the legislature primarily, but "secondarily the Public Service Commission." He is opposed to the abolition of the PSC, though, and calls the suggestion of such a move "a sham and

Knowns and unknowns
alike have mounted their
soap boxes in hot pur-
suit of the governorship.

The Circle hits the
campaign trail for seven
exclusive interviews
that offer a concise
preview of the state's
hottest
campaign in years.

a fraud on the public." He claimed the idea is "being propounded by Beasley as a smoke screen to take the people's minds away from what he and his little group did to stop Governor Wallace's utility package.... Of course, Beasley," he said, "may have some selfish motives other than just a smoke screen. He's looked after those special interests pretty good for eight years as lieutenant governor; he may want to fix it where he can look after them when he's governor."

Baxley said that if elected governor he'll improve PSC staffing "so that you've got somebody that's on a par with the utility company people as far as expertise goes."

The Alabama prison system ranks in disgrace with the utility situation. Baxley called for pervasive change here.

"You can't please the do-gooders and the tear-shedders and the professional

sociologists. . . they think everybody's capable of being rehabilitated, and everybody's not. On the other hand, if you do it right you can't please the hardcore law-and-order crowd either, because you have to cut it right down the middle and use common sense—that's the key, common sense." Baxley says he would construct new prisons—"however many it takes"—until overcrowding is eliminated. Then prisoners would be classified, and first offenders and others with the potential to be rehabilitated would be grouped together and "you try everything you have as far as work-release, and learning a trade, visits from family—things of that nature to try to rehabilitate those people." In the other kind of penitentiary would be the prisoners for whom none of that worked. "Those people," said Baxley, "ought to be strictly made to work for their keep, get up at dawn and work 'til dark and give them simply adequate food, shelter, warmth, and that's it." The goal of the second type of prison is "to keep those people locked away from society as long as you can."

His plan may be overwhelmingly logical, but where will the money come from? Baxley passes off that problem, saying, "The total amount of money to have a prison system that is not turning out worse criminals than they're getting in is a drop in the bucket compared to the total state budget."

Of particular concern to people in Auburn is the running funding controversy in which the state's universities seem to be constantly embroiled. Baxley sees the problem as a conflict between the primary and secondary schools and higher education. The primary and secondary schools have been neglected and "seem to be attacking the institutions of higher learning," said Baxley. "Instead of bringing up the whole education level, they're trying to tear down the only part of our education system that's worked over the years."

Baxley called Lt. Gov. Jere Beasley's part in the controversy "a political play



illustration by Martin Buchanan

to try to get Alabama Education Association forces for him," bringing to light the arch-rivalry existing between the two young politicians who have found themselves, while only about 40 years old, as the front-runners in the race for the most powerful office in state government. Though each of them vehemently denied any political ambition beyond the governor's office, they may find themselves doing battle in the state's political arena for the next thirty years.

Baxley, unlike Beasley, does little to hide his animosity. When Baxley listed the statesman or politician that he most admires as Harry Truman, he was informed that Truman had been Beasley's answer too. "Really?" he said matter of factly. "I like Lincoln, too."

Baxley enters the gubernatorial race with an image fresh to Alabama politics. He is blessed with a scenario worthy of a Hollywood scriptwriter: a ruddy-cheeked, boyish but crusading public prosecutor, brandishing the scalps of numerous dishonest officials and other dastardly types, coming on

the scene when there is obvious need for sweeping reforms. Certain characteristics of the Baxley situation remind one of Big Jim Thompson, the Illinois Republican who had been a successful and colorful prosecutor before he whipped a Daley-machine candidate and won the Illinois governorship. Baxley has so far attracted attention from several national magazines and newspapers as far west as San Francisco.

Whether it's part of his image or not—he insists that he doesn't have a PR man and that good work has brought him his attention—Baxley comes off to many as notably down-to-earth and unsophisticated. Indeed to *The Circle* he said he had no favorite author or political philosopher, though (in fairness) he did stress the need for literature and the arts in education. His speaking style is usually rather loose, though often more straightforward, at least on the surface, than that of most politicians (some may speculate that's all part of the "good ole' boy" hype). At one time he had a reputation for being a

swinger, perhaps one reason why he was the subject of a *Penthouse* magazine story. Married a year and a half he admits, "Before I fell in love with my wife, I was pretty wild."

When he won a lot of money in Las Vegas at blackjack he received a good deal of press coverage and a rumor circulated that organized crime let him win in order to get a hold on him. Baxley said that the Mafia exists in other places, but not in Alabama, and he said it takes continued vigilance to keep it out of the state. He did not seem reticent about the Las Vegas episode, and, when we asked him if he really won \$20,000, he responded, "I won more than that."

Baxley's tone is extremely confident when he speaks of what he would do as governor, indicating either blatant abuse of the campaign promise or, of course, sincere belief in what he could accomplish.

For example, he states in no uncertain terms, "With me as governor, this state would grow. We'd bring in so much industry in this state that it's un-

real." Of his prison reform plan, he ambitiously declares, "It would begin the first day after I'm elected governor."

He complained that, because of "loopholes that special interests have got," such things as "McDonald's hamburger stands, motels, K-Marts, car dealerships... have been built under tax-free bond-issues, not paying a cent." Asked how he could remedy the situation as governor, Baxley replied, "It's easy. You get the legislature to change them."

Anybody who says it will be "easy" to get the legislature to do anything is likely one of three things: a lying politician, a dreamer, or a heckuva candidate for governor.

by Mark C. Winne

BEASLEY

"If the attorney general has any inkling or any information that he's withholding as to the special interest domination in the legislature, then it is his responsibility to call a grand jury promptly and give that grand jury the information that he obviously has and to prosecute," responds Lt. Gov. Jere Beasley to allegations by Attorney General Bill Baxley that four or five legislators are able to control the legislature for special interests.

Baxley was later to identify those legislators as "Beasley and his little clique in the Senate more than anybody else." While it's characteristic of the Baxley approach, that particular brand of politicking—name-calling or plain-speaking, depending on one's point of view—is not Beasley's style if his nearly-hour-and-a-half interview with *The Circle* is an indication. Beasley is a rather staid, calm conversationalist, not particularly reticent, but obviously skilled at avoiding statements that might put him out on a shaky political limb.

He emphatically denied any hint of animosity toward George Wallace, though the latter has made no secret of ill-feeling towards Beasley. Beasley, 41, won the lieutenant governor's post in his first venture into politics in 1970. Before that, though, he had been heavily involved in the campaigns of other people, notably including George Wallace. Wallace, now however, is widely quoted as calling Beasley "a lackey of Alabama Power."

Beasley acts bewildered at why Wallace made such a statement and in fact, whether indeed it's a device to obscure favorable treatment of Alabama Power or not as opponents would likely charge, he was still

somewhat critical of utilities in the state and of the Public Service Commission.

"If I'd been governor for sixteen years," said Beasley, "I'd find it real hard to blame anybody else for [such] a problem that faces the people."

"I think we've done a very poor job of regulating the public utilities companies in general. It just so happens that the power company has been singled out, as the culprit, of all utility companies. And partly it is their fault. Part of it is the state's fault....The Public Service Commission has the sole authority under Alabama law to regulate the public utility companies. And they've done a very poor job, in my opinion, of regulating."

Though he says the PSC is understaffed and though he's "sure that the three commissioners are fine people as far as just being good folks," Beasley doubted their expertise in the field of utilities regulation. Beasley noted one commissioner, Chris Whatley, who "at one point was very consumer-oriented" but "after his appointment by Governor Wallace, he has fallen into line with the utilities."

Despite such seeming circumstantial evidence, Beasley said he doesn't think Alabama Power holds undue influence on elected officials.

Another PSC-related irony that Beasley detailed involved a lawyer from Birmingham and a move that has cost the consumers thousands. "At that time, I thought he was opposed to utilities," said Beasley. "But I go back and read the record...and the actual fuel adjustment pass-on that we are operating under right now was suggested by Mr. Morris Bishop, an attorney from Birmingham."

Likening the PSC's regulation of the utility companies to "fighting an elephant with a fly swatter," Beasley said, "If something is not done to correct the situation, the Public Service Commission ought to be abolished outright, and the responsibilities placed on the governor's office....Obviously if you can regulate banking and insurance through the governor's office, you ought to be able to regulate the utilities through the governor's office."

Locally, Beasley has been criticized for his fiscal treatment of Auburn University.

"I've heard, certainly, that I 'picked-on' Auburn and I've heard this from various sources. It has concerned me," said the Auburn alumnus.

"It just so happened that Auburn did have some problems that really required some...corrections and these were pointed out to the administration at Auburn very quietly." Beasley said discrepancies were discovered by an in-

dependent auditing firm hired by the Board of Trustees.

Beasley said the auditing report made over 100 specific recommendations for improvement at Auburn. Though he said he doubts there has been blatant negligence in Auburn in this area, he says, "there was foot-dragging."

"During that time they were supposedly picked-on," he said, "their funding level was increased probably to a greater extent than any other college in Alabama."

(Percentage-wise, statistics supplied by the university administration say that Auburn University ranks eighth out of fourteen state institutions in funding increase from 1975-76 to 1977-78.)

Beasley said that if anyone thinks the budget control subcommittee "was used for political gain, I could point directly to Auburn University where it's been nothing but a minus for me because of the information fed out to the alumni (and, I expect,) the student body....If everything I heard is accurate, obviously a lot of Auburn people do not understand the situation with Auburn."

Beasley warned against neglecting one area of education for another, and cited the importance of vocational education.

"I think anyone who can be honest with himself can state that we've sort of looked down our nose at vocational education. I say we, the government people, are more guilty in this regard than anyone connected with education. Every part of education is important."

Beasley correlates Alabama's low statistical ranking nationwide in per capita income to a high percentage of people without a high school education. People who never advanced beyond the eighth grade, he said, without particular skills or a few lucky breaks, find it tough-going. "Some will wind up on welfare, some will wind up more or less wards of the state or the government in general and, as a result, cost a great deal and also at the same time contribute nothing to government or to the system...."

Vocational programs, such as the Alabama Industrial Training program, he says, are important to fill that void.

Anti-Beasley factions have perhaps been loudest in their criticism of the way he's handled the legislature and of his allegedly turning the lieutenant governor's post into a "full-time job."

Beasley said that a legislative reform movement was generated in the 1970 election and that most of the reforms called for in an ensuing plan have been adopted. He denies having control over

the senate rules, saying, "Every four years the rules are adopted in whatever shape, form, or fashion the senate wants them to be." Recognizing one-time problems in the legislative rules, Beasley relates that he formed a committee ("very few of them were politically aligned with me") to rewrite the rules. They did so and the senate adopted the revision.

To the rational observer, criticism for performing the duties of an office "full-time" seems absurd by itself. Nonetheless, Beasley's political foes are quick to criticize him for such an act. One can understand the undesirability if that extra effort leads to overstepping the powers legally allowed for the job. Beasley was asked if he would like to see the post remain "full-time":

"I think this depends in large part on what the legislature envisions for the office; on what the governor would like for the office to be; and, to an extent, on the person holding the office.... Contrary to the public belief, the Constitution of Alabama does not prohibit the lieutenant governor from doing things other than presiding over the senate. While I've been lieutenant governor, I've maintained a law practice, for example. I've maintained an active farm in Barbour County.... I think, in the future, the job should really be clarified.... I suppose there are people in Alabama who feel the lieutenant governor shouldn't be doing anything other than presiding over the senate. I've tried to abide by what I think the people want. Polls that have been taken indicate the people think it ought to be a full-time job. And frankly, I think it ought to be."

Beasley was vociferous in his criticism of a prison system that "often-times is turning out hardened criminals from persons who came in when they committed a relatively minor offense." He called for an emphasis on rehabilitation and said he didn't think it would take "all that much money" to correct some of the problems since, for one thing, the prison system can be made about 80-85 percent self-supporting.

Beasley cited "very poor, poor management" as a reason why, among other things, money provided by the state two years ago to the prison system for two new prisons remains dormant. "They haven't even selected a site yet." County jails are forced to bear the burden of state prisoners at great expense.

"Anybody in authority [in the prison system] would have to share the blame," he said.

"Just as soon as I was elected governor, there would be changes.... I believe that the prison board would be willing

to make the necessary changes if the governor insisted that they be made."

Beasley said he doesn't think ambition motivates his political career, though he says he has been ambitious. "Everybody who seeks public office is somewhat ambitious."

He was spurred onto the election trail when, while managing Jim Allen's senatorial campaign, he discovered that he wasn't intimidated by some of the political-types he came in contact with, and he thought he "had more to offer the public" than they did.

He says he would prefer a one-term governor, though he seemed careful not to totally rule out the possibility of running for reelection if he's elected in 1978.

Beasley characterized the image of his upcoming campaign as "more progressive perhaps than what Alabama is accustomed to."

by Mark C. Winne

JAMES

"It's time for a new beginning in Alabama." So goes the campaign slogan of gubernatorial candidate Fob James of Opelika. "I'm the only working man in the race. I am concerned about the people of Alabama, not making a career for myself in politics. I am only interested in how state government achieves its function of providing a better quality of life for its people."

James outlined some of his goals and plans for the "new beginning" in an interview with *The Circle*.

CIRCLE: Why do you want to be governor of Alabama?

JAMES: I grew up in Alabama and plan to live here the rest of my life. I want my state to be the best place to live for all its people. The next few years hold many difficult decisions to be made in state government. The governor can't be too concerned about the outcome of some election or about building a political career or the decisions will not be made in the best interest of all our people. I think the theme of government can be stated in five words: productivity, performance, accountability, predictability, and compassion. As governor, I would be chief executive officer—the buck would stop at me. As chief executive officer, I would incorporate the concepts behind these five words into state government.

CIRCLE: Do you think your inexperience in government will hurt you?

JAMES: No, I don't think that I need to know how things have been run in the past. I'm only interested in running

them the way they're supposed to be run.

CIRCLE: The stepping down of Gov. George Wallace represents the end of an era in Alabama. In your opinion, what are the best and the worst things he has done for Alabama during his reign?

JAMES: I am not interested in the past. I only care about what happens after January 1, 1979. However, I do think there have been some good accomplishments and programs in recent years, especially the trade school program.

CIRCLE: What plans for higher education do you have?

JAMES: I would like to see higher education in the state broad and complete enough to put an end to the need of some Alabama students to go out of state to study what they are interested in. Education should be result oriented, beginning at the bottom of elementary school and going up the ladder to college. I want to eliminate some of the duplication in education facilities in the state and then see that the remaining facilities are funded adequately to provide a quality education.

CIRCLE: Alabama ranks 46th among the states in per capita income. How do you account for this and what do you plan to do about the poverty in Alabama?

JAMES: Well, first I think that we should consider when talking about Alabama's rank in per capita income that Alabama probably has a lower cost of living than many of the other states. I realize though that there is a real problem of poverty in Alabama. I don't believe that there are any hungry, starving people as such. The food stamp program takes care of this. The key to doing something about the poverty problem is to provide gainful employment in good jobs for the people of the state. I see two ways to do this—create many more jobs, both by creating a climate for expansion and also by attracting new industries here, and train the state's workers for the jobs that are available.

CIRCLE: What are some of the major reforms that you want to institute concerning such issues as utilities, prisons, and the organization of state government?

JAMES: First, I think the Public Service Commission needs to be restructured so it can regulate to a greater degree the activities of Alabama Power. Citizens of Alabama should not have to pay more for electricity than people in Chicago and Los Angeles. We must determine the real cost of generating electricity so that people can be sure that they are being charged fairly.

The Alabama prison system is a disgrace—we need some absolute reform in this area. I will concentrate both on rehabilitation programs and keeping the repeat offender locked up.

At the present, there are more than 200 state agencies. We need to reduce the number of agencies to eliminate duplication of services and the waste of tax dollars.

CIRCLE: What statesman or political figure do you admire most and why?

JAMES: I have several political figures that I admire. There are three Americans, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, and Teddy Roosevelt, and one Englishman, Winston Churchill, that I especially admire. My reason—their honesty and belief in expressing the truth. Leadership based on honesty—that is my goal.

CIRCLE: To what extent do you think the public has the right to know all your business?

JAMES: By running for governor, I am applying for a job. The people of Alabama will hire me with their votes and pay me with their taxes. Therefore, as my prospective employers, they have the right to know anything they want to know about me, both public and personal.

CIRCLE: What has been your greatest defeat and victory and how have you learned from them?

JAMES: I have experienced both defeats and victories in the business world. In 1962, I started Diversified Products with two employees. Today the company employs 1200 persons at its headquarters in Opelika and has plants in Los Angeles and Toronto. There were many ups and downs along the way. Hard work and tough times have tested my judgment and common sense. My instincts have become sharper, and I have learned the lesson of honest labor and personal discipline. I have also come to appreciate people, their efforts, and their needs.

CIRCLE: What is your main goal as Alabama's governor?

JAMES: I want to give the Alabama taxpayer his money's worth. The tax dollar is the most precious dollar in the country. Performance—that is my task—and the taxpayers must be able to see results.

CIRCLE: What do you want to do before you die?

JAMES: I live one day at a time. I just want to be able to say that I did the best I could with what the good Lord gave me.

by Sharon Stacey

BREWER

Although he thinks it too early to make any official announcement of candidacy for the office of Governor of the State of Alabama, Albert Brewer is "seriously considering" throwing his hat into the ring. He says he wants to "be involved with meeting some of the problems we face in the state today."

Brewer has definitely had experience in government at the state level. A year after he finished law school he was elected to the state legislature. He later became lieutenant governor and then governor upon the death of Lurleen Wallace. He says he believes he can give the state the leadership it needs because "virtually all my adult life has been involved in state government."

The Democratic primary is set for September, so most of the candidates will formally kick off their campaigns in the spring. Brewer does not have a campaign manager yet and says he has not really begun to work on the structure of his campaign organization.

Brewer says his main concern is the lack of leadership and planning in Alabama's government. He wants to see the government in a position to "be capable of dealing with the problems of the people. We in Alabama have never done any planning, we've never anticipated, we've never thought about where we're going to be five years from now." Reasons he gives for these failings are the bad reputation of the legislature and the cumbersome executive branch of government.

Another complaint that Brewer has with the state of governmental affairs in Alabama is the outdated state constitution. "I think that the reason we haven't progressed more is because we've stayed in the framework of a horse-and-buggy atmosphere." Brewer sponsored legislation to correct this when he was governor in 1969 by creating the Constitution Revision Committee. "It completed its work in 1973 with recommendations for a full revision of the constitution and there its recommendations have languished."

Brewer attributes this lack of action to the lack of support on the part of the people. "We'll get a new constitution when the people of this state want a new constitution." The answer to the problem according to Brewer is leadership, but he stresses that he does not mean one person: "I mean leadership at all levels of our society; people who are concerned about conditions that exist and who are willing to lead and encourage people to do something about it."

One of the reasons that changes in government of this sort are not received as well by the people, says Brewer, is their abstract nature. "It's not like promising a fellow you're going to pave the road in front of his house when you tell him you're going to get his government in shape, his constitution in shape, and give his state leadership. This doesn't strike a cord with a lot of people, but it's an essential."

Recently much has been said about the stranglehold the special interest groups have on the legislature. Brewer says: "Nearly every group in Alabama is represented in the legislature, observing and trying to influence. So when you say 'special interest groups,' you're painting a very broad picture, you're touching everyone." According to Brewer, the key issue here concerns the dominance of certain groups, particularly the groups whose strengths are so nearly equal to that of the legislature that neither one can dominate and they reach a stalemate. He says that the answer lies in leadership.

Brewer feels that the primary issue on people's minds today is the utility situation. "I haven't worked out a formal policy on the utility question yet, but I don't believe people will be fooled by simple answers to complex questions anymore. We've got to have an agency that will be capable of regulating the utilities. Utility regulation today rewards inefficiency because return is based on costs." He feels that the people need to know that they are getting the best break possible when it comes to utility rates.

Alabama constantly ranks low nationally in such areas as per capita income and educational quality. "This is directly related to our standard of living," says Brewer. "It reflects our failure to plan, to provide, and these things reflect our failure of leadership."

Regarding the diversion of funds designated for education, Brewer says that the government should not divert revenues because that risks breaking the people's faith in their government. As a solution to this problem, he suggests that a tax be repealed entirely and redirected for another cause. He says he cannot see how Alabama can afford to divert funds away from education as long as its education system is so far from the best in the country.

In reference to the dog track in Mobile County and its contributions to education in that area, Brewer says that he has some serious doubts about gambling, but as long as the project is closely regulated he has nothing to say against it.

Brewer named advances in education as the high mark of Wallace ad-

ministrations. The worst thing Wallace has done for Alabama according to Brewer is really what he has not done. Brewer cited failure to give leadership to the legislature and failure to prepare government for its proper role as Wallace's shortcomings.

The political figure Albert Brewer most admires is Harry Truman because he "overcame lack of opportunity and lack of education to achieve success."

Brewer feels that he has broadened his objectives in life since leaving the office of governor. He doesn't feel that he is restricted to serving in state government, but he wants to "accomplish an objective of public service—of being involved." He offers this advice to young people: "Become involved. Realize that you can have an impact on the future."

by Pat McArthur

WOODS

If the manner in which he discussed with the *Circle* what he would do if governor is any indication, Charles Woods is ready to wage a relatively uninhibited gubernatorial campaign. Owner of a Dothan television station, he is a nearly-perennial gubernatorial candidate and reached a run-off with Jere Beasley in the 1974 lieutenant governor's race.

Woods had enlisted in the RCAF in the early years of the WWII, and, when old enough, transferred to the Army Air Force. He still bears the scars of burns received in a wartime plane crash. He was the lone survivor, a fact he attributes to strong faith.

Woods has a song to sing different from his competitors: one of dishonest elections. Corruption, in fact, appears to be one of the key themes of his campaign. Speaking of the relationship between himself and special interests, the self-described "free agent to help the poor people" said, "They can't buy me, they can't scare me. . .so they can't control me."

Woods described sundry alleged dishonest state election activities. In one sequence, the city Democrat chairman appoints "political hangers-on" to man polling places. These people, charges Woods, "help" people pull levers, count votes wrong, and suggest candidates to voters just before they enter the voting booth, among other immoral activities.

Woods also bemoans the "bought black vote." Says he: "I had one black leader tell me, 'Listen, we can deliver 90 percent of the black vote to a white candidate on a silver platter.'" According to this theory, money is passed through

various levels of black leadership and "some of it sticks to their pockets" as it goes from state officials to county officials, etc. Some blacks, says Woods, are intimidated into voting for a particular candidate because they are told that the way they vote can be checked on after the election, and they are afraid of ostracism by the community for going against the machine's candidate.

The polling place isn't the only place he sees corruption.

"The vested interest groups spend a world of time around the legislature," said Woods, citing a need to "try to do everything we can to prevent them from buying votes from members of the senate or house."

"The man at the top sets the pace for honesty," said Woods. "I would not tolerate dishonesty anywhere I found it."

Woods, who asserts that we need a businessman to run the state since it's really a big business, lists a regressive income tax next on the roster of pressing problems in Alabama, after crooked elections. Under our current revenue system, he says, too much money ends up going to the federal government.

Woods is also enthusiastic in the area of utility reform. "I think that Alabama Power is one of the biggest rip-offs in the state of Alabama," he opined, adding that he thinks Alabama Power officials have paid bribes.

"Right now the utilities only have to buy two people on the Public Service Commission to get what they want," he

said. He called for transferring utility regulation authority to the legislature, "where the utilities will have to buy more people to get what they want."

"All of our educational facilities need help," said Woods. "In my opinion, education should have the number one priority as far as funding is concerned."

Woods, saying he didn't have much time to read other than business publications like *Forbes* and *The Wall Street Journal*, did not list a favorite author. Asked about the political figure or statesman he most admired, he responded: "I think Roosevelt was a great president. Truman probably did a lot of good; Kennedy probably did a lot of good."

Since he served on the state's prison board from 1959-63, even chairing it at one point, one would think Woods has particularly keen insight into Alabama's prison situation.

"It's the worst in the nation," he says. "It's never going to be run right as long as you've got someone like Frank Lee in there." Woods said Lee was dismissed from one job in the system several years ago in a personnel house-cleaning but merely rehired in a different capacity later. Woods said that when he was on the prison board the system was "very corrupt" and he tried to bring that out then. He seems to blame corruption for the problems in Alabama's prisons today.

Woods said effective change would involve "a whole new concept," and he particularly emphasized the need for



Photo by Martin Buchanan

keeping hardened criminals locked-up and giving youthful offenders a second chance.

The affable yet assertive candidate says he'd like to see a return to the healthy two-party system in Alabama, though he emphasizes he remains solidly a Democrat.

Woods said hunger is an important humanitarian cause to him, adding that health protection is likewise important. He claims some further noble motives for entering politics:

"In my particular case, I could've retired many years ago as far as the financial aspects are concerned," he said.

"You can decide to retire, keep your nose to the grindstone and add zeroes to your bank account, or you can help your fellow man."

"I chose the latter," said Woods, "to try to help my fellow man, the poor man that needs help."

Whatever his motives, Charles Woods remains an interesting phenomenon: surfacing regularly as a candidate for state office, he wages a down-to-earth campaign aimed he says at the working man and the poor—possibly, judging from his bought-black-vote contention, the white laborers and working man. And he keeps coming back for more. One can remain within the bounds of journalistic objectivity and still say that Woods has proven he is, if anything, a fighter.

by Mark C. Winne

McDONALD

Sid McDonald has spent the past 11 years in state government. In 1966 he was elected to the House of Representatives and served as chairman of the Commerce and Transportation Committee. In 1974, McDonald moved to the Alabama Senate, where, he says, he developed a deep interest in the educational system of the state. He has served as chairman of the Education Committee and vice-chairman of the Alabama Commission on Higher Education from 1969 till present.

EDUCATION

According to McDonald, the tremendous population growth in Alabama in recent years has poured substantial revenue into educational programs. "It is time now for the state government to take a close look at what it's doing with this money, and where educational programs are headed—why Johnny can't read, why the children in elementary and grade schools in Alabama

score low in the national average on achievement tests. These questions and others can be answered only if the state government is willing to take a close look at what is happening. Most present programs were not preceded by any careful organization or planning."

REFORM-MINDED

"There is no way to understate the need for reform in Alabama government," says McDonald. A great need exists for prison reform, fiscal reorganization, and revamping the legislature. The governor is the only person with enough power to incite any kind of major reform. The reason the governor can incite change is because he has the power to use public opinion. With public opinion anything, even changing the Alabama State Legislature, is possible."

"Adequate government reform," says McDonald, "would involve legislative reform. The state legislature would never reform itself because those who have the power to reform would lose power were it reformed. I want to do something significant in state government before I leave it. The governor, through the utilization of public opinion, is the person able to update the state government."

FROM THE OLD SOUTH TO THE NEW SOUTH

McDonald says he has "a clear vision of Alabama," as a part of the Old South moving to the New South. He feels the economic growth of this developmental period could be great if certain things are done and sees the need to acknowledge and address the real problems of Alabama's "sick state government" as essential. It is, he believes, the duty of the people of Alabama to get involved in this election. Expounding upon the importance of the election, McDonald said, "Clearly we will have an opportunity for change with the next administration. Policies change with administrations; they are a turning point—a crossroads."

McDonald stressed the importance of appointing capable persons to office. "Governors can't run the state. It's the people they bring to Montgomery and appoint to high administrative positions, boards and committees to design and carry out change who run the government. These people reflect the governor." He also denounced favoritism in making appointments, citing past appointments of campaign bumper sticker chairmen to high administrative offices as an example. "Political debts should not be paid off with administrative positions."

LIFE ENHANCER

McDonald believes that the expanding role of literature and the arts in education "speaks again to the growing socio-economic awareness of the people in the state." He feels that the liberal arts have long been neglected. He called the liberal arts "life enhancers," and stated that the most crucial need in this area is the need for qualified leaders, since this area requires less money than other state programs. McDonald said that it was the duty of the state to accommodate those citizens who are interested in the fine or liberal arts, just as much as other humanistic areas. "I think there are a world of people in Alabama who are willing to give their time and efforts to further these programs. We've not, in the past, had a state government interested in this type of pursuit, and the time has come to say, 'Everybody who wants to help, raise your hand.'"

McDonald says his favorite author is Taylor Caldwell. "Her writing represents great scholarship. She is a great analyst of historical data, recorder of history, and skillful author, because she intertwines important historical data into the lives of her characters. She portrays characters whose lives are central figures in the Christian faith. Oddly enough, my second favorite author is Daphne DeMaurier; I guess I just like women authors."

When asked about his principal strength in the coming election, McDonald said, "I am not using my elected office to gain political advantage; in any office it is important to make the right decision every day without regard to political advantage or getting re-elected. We will best be served by a governor who wants to do the things to help the state rather than one who is working for self-interest."

"I am not a professional politician. My strength is that I don't need this office just for my ego or income. I just want to do something constructive for the state government."

by Cynthia Dodd

WEATHER CONCERTO

The timpani roars like a thunderclap,
Lightning strikes in the cymbal crash
And beautiful drops of music rain.

—Maurice Snelling

HUNT

In January, a group of citizens helped persuade Guy Hunt, a former probate judge of Cullman County, to run for the governorship and as *The Circle* goes to press he is the only Republican candidate. He cited several reasons for his decision to enter the race:

"The state has not had the growth and prosperity I feel she has a right to. We're the second richest state, next to Alaska, and I'm tired of being ranked 46th. We have a vast reserve of natural resources—gas, coal, a good port. We're fixing to have one of the most navigable waterways and I feel we need to develop resources.

"Also, I'm very much in favor of our free economy and I feel it is under attack by those wanting a socialist government."

What qualifies him to run for the governorship? "I'm not used to blowing my own horn, so other people would have to help answer that. I do think that possibly background helps qualify me. A farm background is necessary to help understand Alabama's problems and needs since farming is a vital aspect of the state. Being raised on a farm I have insight into poverty and wasn't born with a silver spoon in my mouth. I can relate to the poor on the farm and in the city. As a probate judge for twelve years I dealt with mental health problems in every area, crime, and juvenile problems, and I have had a good general overlook and view of the problems facing the state. Through my family business I have gained expertise."

How will he run his campaign? "We're seeking grassroots support and want at least 10,000 young people from 14 to 23 involved in the campaign. I don't think young people in the past have had enough input into campaigns and administration. I will be running a vigorous campaign myself and will be telling people that after 100 years it's getting about time for a change and I think they'll be willing for a change. I know people think it's an uphill battle, but I think we need the kind of governor who's not afraid to go against the odds and fight the uphill struggle."

Concerning prison reform plans and philosophy, Hunt says:

"With prisons I want neither hotels nor jungles. I don't want to make hardened criminals out of those who weren't when they entered and I want more minimum security. When they come out I want them rehabilitated. I want to be tough on repeat and career offenders. I plan to have special teams

of prosecutors to get these offenders off the streets within a few days. It's been proven that much of the violent crimes are committed by those while on bail especially to help pay for expensive lawyers. I plan to propose that an additional one to five years be added to the sentence for violent crimes committed with a gun. I want a civil liability law so that victims can get recompense."

Commenting on the influence George Wallace has had during his long reign, Hunt said:

"I would not want to get into personalities with that question and besides I will not be running against him for the governorship. We can't blame one man for the last one hundred years of government. We've not worked hard enough to put people of both parties in."

Hunt's favorite author is Dr. David Schartz who wrote *The Magic of Thinking Big*. He also admires Napoleon Hill and when he was young, poets such as Stevenson.

About education, he says: "In education I want to bring teachers, administrators, and parents together to get a total look at what we need. I want to bring in the business community to see what kind of training our students need, especially in all your specialized fields. I want to look ahead and see where we're going five, ten, fifteen years in education. I don't think we can have a major university in every county although some people want that. The state can't afford it. As I always say, 'Good education is expensive and poor education is more expensive.' My solemn responsibility and duty is that we grow to an extent that our highly-trained young people stay in the state. I think that this [leaving the state] is something that has bothered me all these years. Our young people have been recruited directly out of college because there's nothing for them here. We have not had the kind of growth we should have. Wages and salaries have been lower than other states. If a company can offer a young person 20 or 25 thousand dollars and Alabama can only offer 10 or 12 he's got to give it some thought even if it's miles away from home."

Asked about the importance of literature and liberal arts, Mr. Hunt said: "Literature has always been important. Especially when I was young it motivated me to think and dream. I don't think we can have a great state or country without dreamers. I know it provoked me. It kind of gives a person an idea of the different purposes in life."

What humanitarian cause, such as hunger, would receive particular atten-

tion from Hunt? "Mental health, which of course has been in the courts a long time. My oldest daughter is retarded so I've naturally had feelings in that area, and it will receive particular compassion and attention from me. I want to push for more research in that area. Right now a lot of mental health problems are being treated by large doses of pills and we need to see if schizophrenia is related to chemical balance. If we can prevent mental illness then we can put these people back into the labor force which will help save the taxpayers money. I think I would like to see the hospitals run more like a home, be community-oriented systems, rather than patients being miles away from home."

Hunt believes that Alabama Power and other utilities must be better regulated. "A government must be fair to all concerns such as utilities. I will ask the legislature to set up guidelines in this matter. Right now we have an ineffective body and I want more qualified accountants, auditors, and engineers to investigate and make the proper recommendations. We must have effective studies of the companies and the results be required for any agency regulated by the government. Sometimes big companies forget about cost reductions and we've got to get away from that."

The politicians or statesmen Hunt most admires are Ronald Reagan, Senator Jim Allen, Robert Taft of Ohio, and Jack Edwards.

In legislative reform he would "bring more business expertise into the government which will give us more efficiency and cut out unnecessary spending of tax money. To help change the legislature I'm going to ask the people to elect a lot of Republicans so we won't be solid Democrat or Republican. When you have only one party everybody goes in separate directions and with variety it requires both parties to do a lot of research and be on top of things. Alabama hasn't grown like it should because she has been a one-party state for over a hundred years. Businesses are going to look at the political system and a one-party system is never stable. For example, we've got a plant that's the highest paying and they're here because I was in office. They called to find if both parties were running the county, and since they were it showed healthy thinking on the part of the people. Industrial growth is the only way we can fund and finance without new taxes. I think the state can grow this way and I want to avoid any increase in taxes. People are paying all the taxes they can."

by Janet Daly



painscape u.s.a.

when the churning in the ventricles of your heart
becomes too swift for you to safely steer

disguises are the shore of least resistance
in this land of a thousand convenient romances

a friend of a friend
can have a passport forged

some doctor
will discreetly change your face

the color of your eyes and hair
can easily be altered

so you'll settle into new surroundings
cultivating new gestures

a new profession
and new friends

who can accommodate
the stranger you have created.

—A.J. Wright

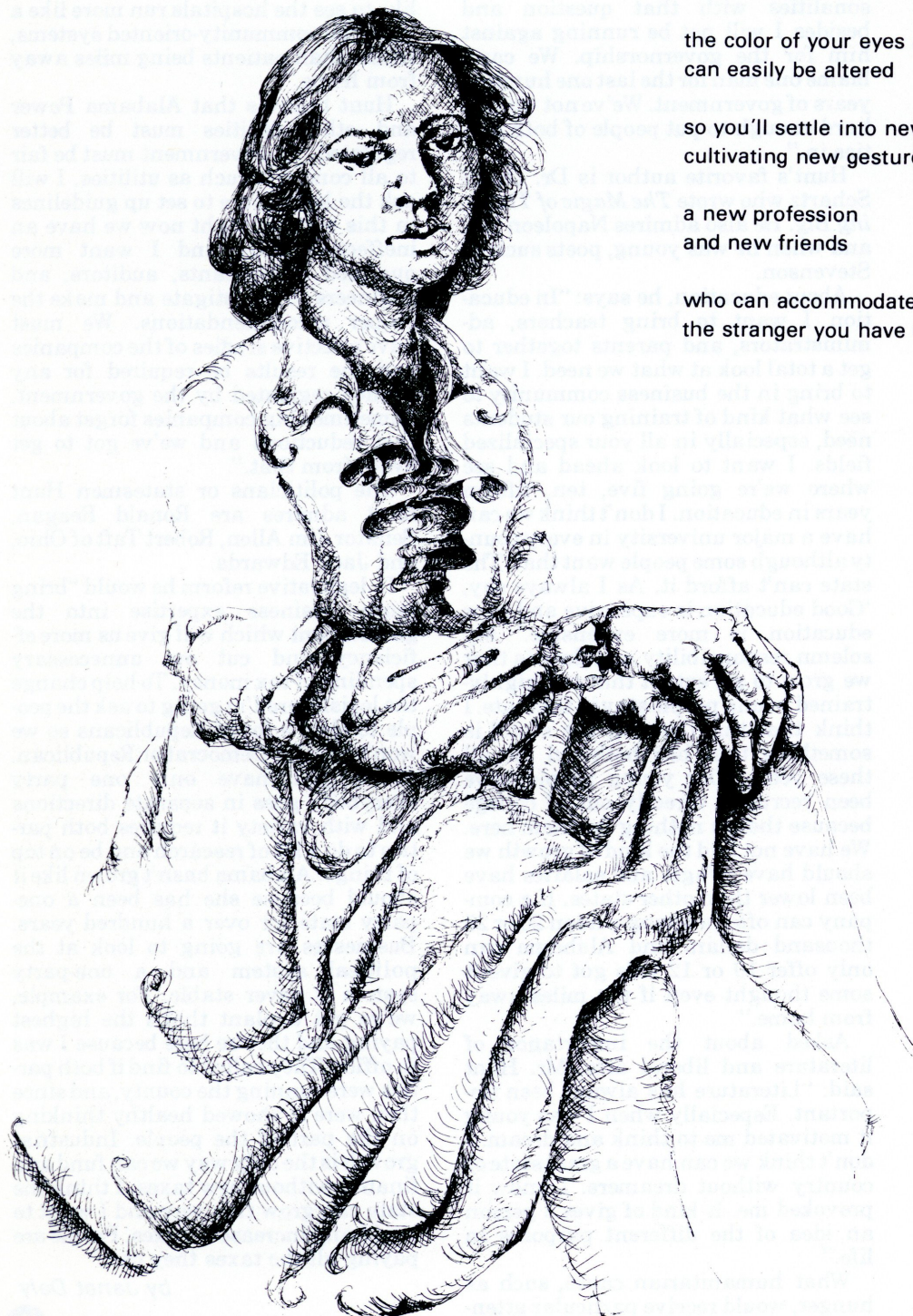
Why must it be
that,
the two most
beautiful
things

one person
can give

another; love and trust

Are so
difficult
to give?

—Diana Huff



drawing by Susan Waldrip

Go bananas over wimpy Sillya!

The gubernatorial election preview appearing elsewhere in this issue takes a look at the biggest political campaign taking place in the state next year. We decided, though, that we would be remiss in our journalistic duty if we failed to touch on this year's biggest political event namely—Auburn's Miss Homecoming race.

Rather than just report on the results (we left that responsibility to the *Plainsman*, the *Opelika-Auburn News*, and the *Alumnews*) the *Circle* decided to research the matter firsthand. Being a bonafide campus organization, albeit lacking the Greek letters to prove it, we decided to sponsor our own write-in candidate.

Rather than just jump into this thing prematurely and totally screw it up, we launched a thorough, systematic investigation into the best way to handle such a campaign—and then we totally screwed it up.

A dedicated team of political scientists carefully scrutinized and analyzed the methods used by each of the other candidates. The researchers looked for two things: 1. outstanding characteristics of each separate campaign; and 2. the common features shared by all the campaigners.

Once having gathered this information, we applied it to developing our own campaign. With the best of each of the others, we hoped to approximate the ideal.

Our competition consisted of Dana Barnes, Kelly Cooper, Lauren Bartholomew, Lynn Wimpey, and Celia McGilvray, all top-rate. Dana's campaign will best be remembered for her slogan "Go Bananas for Dana." The pretty little cheerleader was one of the most energetic campaigners and could frequently be seen cartwheeling from fraternity house to fraternity house.

Kelly Cooper, taking a cue from John F. Kennedy's 1960 presidential campaign, adopted the shamrock and the color green as her campaign symbols in an obvious play for the Irish Catholic vote. Observers feel she would have been more successful had she adopted the chewing tobacco leaf and the color red as her symbols and tried to get the Southern Baptist vote.

Lauren's campaign was distinguished by the peach that adorned her posters and banners. Our team of scientists reported that this had significant subconscious impact on her constituency. They noted, however, that the peach reminded students of the University of Georgia, and they recommended that we search for some other fruit. After discarding the pomegranite and avocado, we decided on the all-American apple. Trying to grab some of Kelly's Irish vote, we decided to make it a green apple.

Lynn Wimpey's campaign had a two-pronged thrust. On some of her material was emblazoned the slogan "Good things come in small packages." Other signs and things said simply "Wimpey." The "Wimpey" approach reportedly struck a sentimental chord in one-time "Popeye the Sailor" enthusiasts who remembered Popeye's lovable, hamburger-gulping sidekick named Wimpy. We did not adopt the "good things. . ." slogan, mainly because at the time we planned the campaign we hadn't selected our candidates yet and several on the list of possibilities stood over six-feet tall and hardly came in small packages.

Celia McGilvray's posters and t-shirts read simply "Celia." Apparently, we reasoned, there must be a unique ring to the name which her public relations people thought was strong enough to stand alone, without any gimmicks. Consequently we decided that is the name our ideal candidate should have. Obviously, the name Celia was taken so we searched for the closest substitute and arrived at "Sillya."

We noticed four certain things that every candidate had in common: general beauty, a wide toothy smile, large endearing eyes, and sex appeal. We sent each member of the *Circle* staff to look for people fitting those criteria. Three of those brought in had to be rejected immediately, because editorial board members Charlotte Ward and Wanda Kenton and faculty advisor Kaye Lovvorn all returned with male nominees.

Eventually, we arrived at our choice, Suzy Woreegull, 2 WM (for those of you unfamiliar with the AU classification system, "2" means she's a sophomore and WM stands for "what's a major?"). We changed her name, on advice of our PR people, to Sillya.





We brought her to a few fraternities and sororities to try to gather support. We were able to get the support of only one frat, Lambda Chi Alphabet, the combination social fraternity-scholastic honorary in which one must

be able to down a can of beer in one gulp and recite his ABC's from memory in order to be initiated.

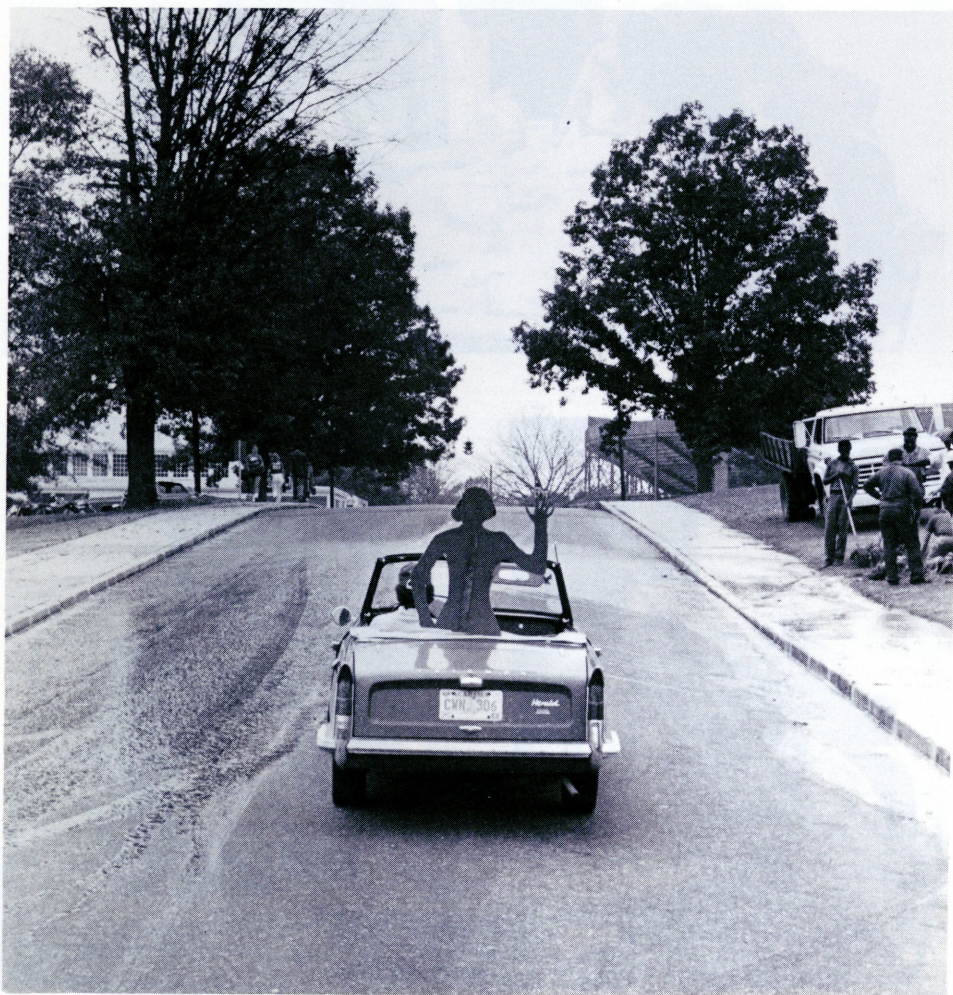
Not to neglect the independent vote, we took her to a few dormitories and apartment buildings. We halted that

practice when, in a Dewey Shortcutt apartment building, roaches ate Silly's shoes as she spoke to a would-be voter.

Kelly's supporters, clad in green t-shirts and honking horns loudly,

Operation False Front





staged a big motorcade down Thach Avenue. Our chief political scientist, I. Voat, said that while the idea of a motorcade had potential, Kelly's clan alienated a number of voters, notably test-takers in Haley Center, and the friends and family of a young coed who suffered a broken leg when the lead car of the motorcade ran her over.

Bearing this in mind, and also since only one of Sillya's supporters was licensed to drive (due to the law forbidding the licensing of drug addicts, alcoholics, and feeble-minded persons), we limited our procession to one car, a compact no less. Here, though, we pulled off a brilliant piece of political strategy. We called it "operation false front" and, in case you're wondering, it did not involve silicone. The CBS footage accompanying this report reveals how we were able to put Sillya in the motorcade and yet have her doing the expected homecoming queen duty of canvassing tables in a cafeteria across campus at the same time.

We've also included a few other mementos from the campaign, which, as you know by now, was unsuccessful since the student body went bananas for Dana's student body instead of Sillya's. There was a bright spot, though. Sillya carried the bulk of Auburn's Irish Baptist green-apple-growing Popeye fans.



Our researchers discovered that perennially, nearly every homecoming candidate has her picture taken peering out from behind or leaning against a tree. Silly, we decided, should be no exception.





MY LOVE IN THE PERFUME

I scented her perfume
And flashed to the daze
Of my love, her soft smile,
All her feminine ways,

And the beginning ...
and now, yet alone,
My love in the perfume
Followed me home.

—Steven Clair



LOVE AT FIRST BLIGHT

The muscle-bound man
and the cellulite queen
walked hand in hand
toward the Coke machine.

"They don't have Tab,"
sighed the madamazelle.
"They don't have Sprite,"
cursed the knight, "Oh hell."

Then the cellulite girl
fell into the arms
of the androgen king
overcome by his charms.

"I can't help but say it,"
"Oh, say it," she said.
"You're softer than mush,"
and he turned light red.

"Oh honey," she cooed,
"Your surface resistance
is twice that of mine
over half the distance!"

"I knew that was it!!"
he yelled with a roar
and knocked with a plop
her fat on the floor.

The Coke bottles sighed
and the Camco machine
saw his handiwork shake
in the cellulite queen.

—Martha Duggar



MY LOVE IN THE PERFORM

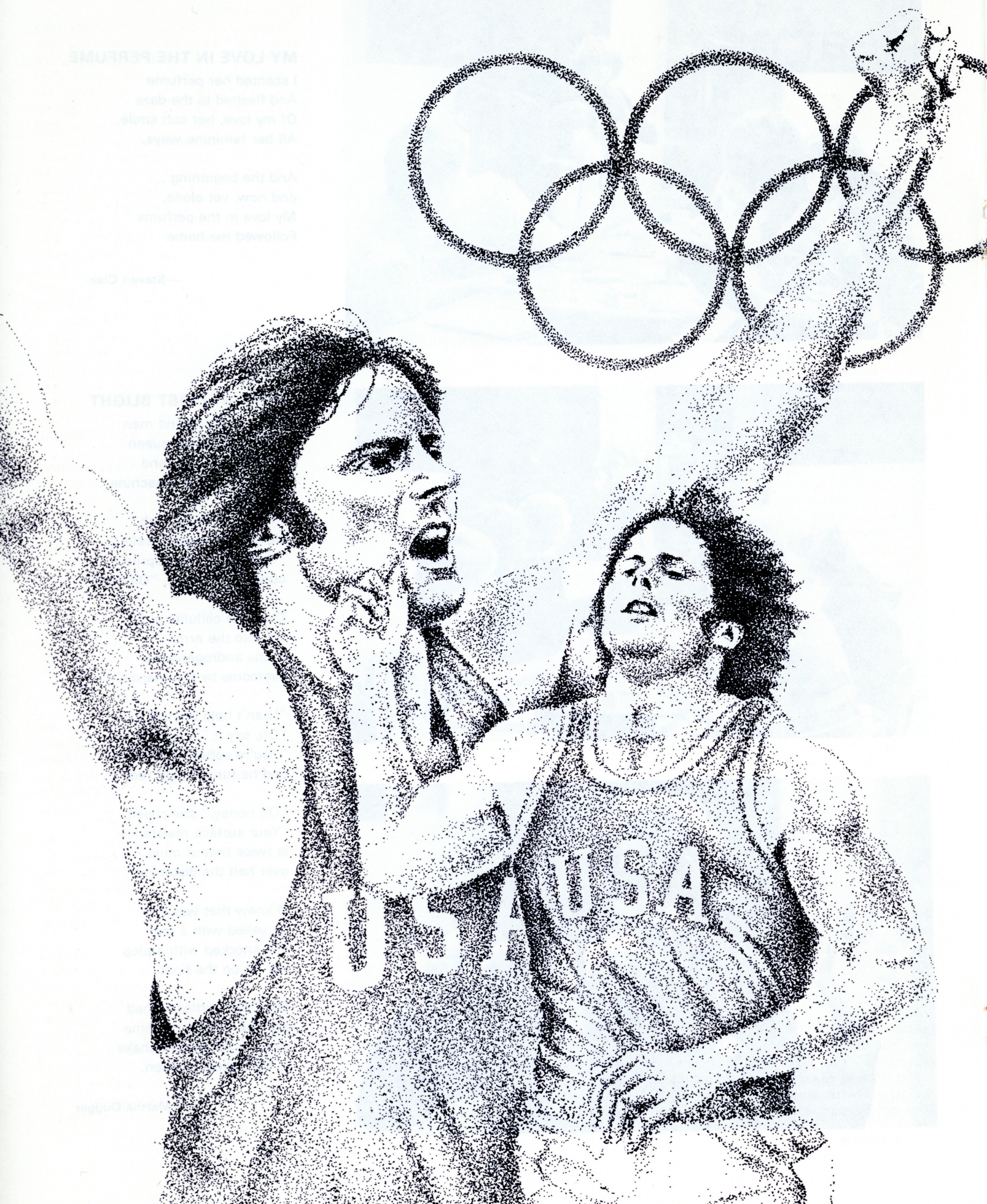
I wanted the perfume
and looked in the dark
Of my love, but only smile
At the perfume stage.

And the beginning
and now the story
My love in the perfume
I wanted the love.

—David Byrne

THAT BLUNT

and
the
the
the



Meat on the Hook: THE SELLING OF BRUCE JENNER

by Gerald Pouncey

After two days, ten events, and 8,618 decathlon points, Bruce Jenner sat contemplating his gold medal in an event which, combining 10 diverse track and field events, may be the most difficult in the Olympics.

"Congratulations, Bruce," said Soviet decathlete Nicholay Avilov. "You've just become a millionaire."

Maybe Avilov was primed with anti-capitalism propaganda back home, but he actually made a shrewd, if not difficult, prediction. Jenner already had the boyish good looks, he already had developed a reasonably articulate speaking voice through three years of speech lessons, and now he had fame—the credential to lift him above the thousands of other good-looking, reasonably articulate athletes.

Jenner has made money from a sport (track) that is notoriously low-paying compared to the more popular national pastimes. He consequently has been afforded a unique opportunity to gain insight into two troubling areas of American athletics: 1. the American amateur, and 2. the commercial exploitation of the successful jock. *The Circle* availed itself of Jenner's vantage point and interviewed him when he visited Auburn.

Exploitation? Who's Exploiting Whom?

Jenner, reared in little Newton, Conn., enjoyed a modestly successful, if obscure, athletic career before he turned to the decathlon. In high school he starred in basketball and football, and he won the state pole-vaulting championship. He entered his first decathlon and set a school record in it at Graceland (Iowa) College, which he attended on a football scholarship.

In 1972, he entered the Olympic trials rated no better than tenth in the country, but he managed to finish third and

qualify for the Munich games where he performed creditably but did not place.

In 1973 Jenner broke an ankle when he missed a pole vault pit. In a comeback two months later, he severely injured his back throwing a javelin. Then came a move to California and the loneliness of a new location.

"All of a sudden that year it seemed like everything was falling in on top of me," said Jenner. "It was very frustrating." For many athletes, such frustration signals the ignoble end of years of practice and pain. But Jenner, of course, came back, set world records, and got millions of dollars worth of free publicity. The field was ripe for the harvest, and Jenner was ready to let the offers come to him. What he didn't expect, however, was the degree to which the media capitalize on fame and familiarity.

"Right after the games, the next morning, these people were calling up on the phone trying to capitalize on what I did by having me put my name on their product, saying 'Hey, quick. Do a commercial. It will take you one day, we'll give you fifty thousand dollars, that'll be the end of it, and we'll never see you again' ... but that's not quite what I wanted."

Mark Spitz (remember him?) had demonstrated that the public's fascination with a gold medallion hung on ribbon can fade quickly. Jenner wanted something solid, something that would last when the glamour of the Olympics had worn off.

"I told them 'I don't just want to do one commercial for you,' he said. "'If I'm going to work for your company, I want to have a long-range contract and I want to be a spokesman for your company' A lot of people wanted to capitalize on it and would say, 'forget it, we don't want that, we just want you to do one thing.'"

"And I'd say, 'okay, forget about it. I don't want that, that's not what I'm looking for.' " As a result, it was four months before Jenner signed his first advertising contract. That first one

was with General Mills, makers of Wheaties cereal.

Despite this cautious entrance into the world of advertising, Jenner is now making money, lots of it. Conservative predictions of his income exceed \$500 thousand annually, and such estimates are indeed modest. Though he planned a career in broadcasting and says he had a job lined up with a TV station in San Bernadino, Calif., Jenner was able to start at the top with a multi-year contract with ABC Sports. He has recently purchased a \$600,000 home in Malibu, and he drives a \$35,000 Porsche. His biography, *The Decathlon Challenge*, had sold 20,000 copies soon after its release, and he receives up to \$5,000 for single-day appearances (the University Program Council says he got \$2,750 to come to Auburn). So, although slow out of the starting blocks, Jenner has been more than forward in selling the gold for green.

Even Jenner's wife, pretty Christy, has gotten into the act, writing a book of her own and starring in an upcoming movie.

Some people wonder about the moral implications of taking so much money for seemingly doing so little. Responds Jenner to those who accuse him of selling out:

"What would they do if they were in the same position I was in? I had people coming to me that were going to offer me money to be able to do something. I just tried to take it and be as selective as I possibly could. Anything I do is realistic.... But for those other people who say that, to heck with them. I really don't care. I'm doing this to satisfy myself and do what I want to do."

The American Amateur

Jenner has witnessed firsthand the limitations imposed on American athletes by the amateur code. Many athletes training for the Olympics, to survive, must hold down full-time jobs separate from the four to six hours a day of training. Compared to the government subsidies received by foreign athletes, the burden imposed on American amateurs is obvious. Yet, many stand-outs retain their amateur status. Is money flowing under the table to give superstars the guise of amateurism?

"They talk about these guys making thirty, forty, fifty thousand dollars a year on the side—completely false! These guys aren't even coming close to that. And there is only the top one-hundredth of a percentile that can even do it. There are maybe five guys or four guys in the whole United States in all of amateur sports that can make a living or pay the rent by going through track and field. [But] I think if you want to

take any amateur athlete who makes it to the Olympic Games, and really look into his background, at some point, yes, he has gone against the amateur code."

The U.S. Olympic Committee has been a center of controversy in amateur athletics for many years. Jenner had this to say, "I think they just have to be organized better. I think there is a lot of things they can be doing. Right now there seems to be momentum heading towards the Olympic Committee to loosen up with some of the money because they can see—because of the pressure that's been put on the Olympic Committee to come up with a better team—that they're going to have to start doing something The momentum is starting, but they have a long way to go."

Yet Jenner does not call for an end to amateurism. He says there are necessary adjustments, though, that should be made in both the code and the U.S. policy toward amateurs, "In the United States when the failure occurs is when you have been training in college and given an education... then, all of a sudden, bango, the four years of eligibility are up, and there you are in the big bad world with no more freebies. And, now, all of a sudden, you have to survive on your own, and that's where the system needs some drastic changes."

One feasible solution, Jenner suggests, involves the country's business sector. "What we have to do is basically work through the capitalistic system. Large corporations have to say, 'Hey, we want to have a good Olympic team, so we are going to put two million dollars to ten million dollars or twenty million dollars into an amateur program to help support it through the years.' A lot of times it is a very good image for a company to get involved with [Olympics]."

Life has been good to Jenner since the Olympic Games. But one wonders where he would be if he had not won the gold medal at Montreal. "If I hadn't won [the gold medal] I think I'd still be doing the exact same thing I'm doing today, but just not on as big a scale, and not as many people would be watching," he says. But Bruce Jenner did win the gold medal, and now the entire world watches. The girls drool and the guys admire as Jenner continues down the road of success, reaping the bountiful fruits of his labor. He has settled smoothly and discreetly into the life of the rich and famous.

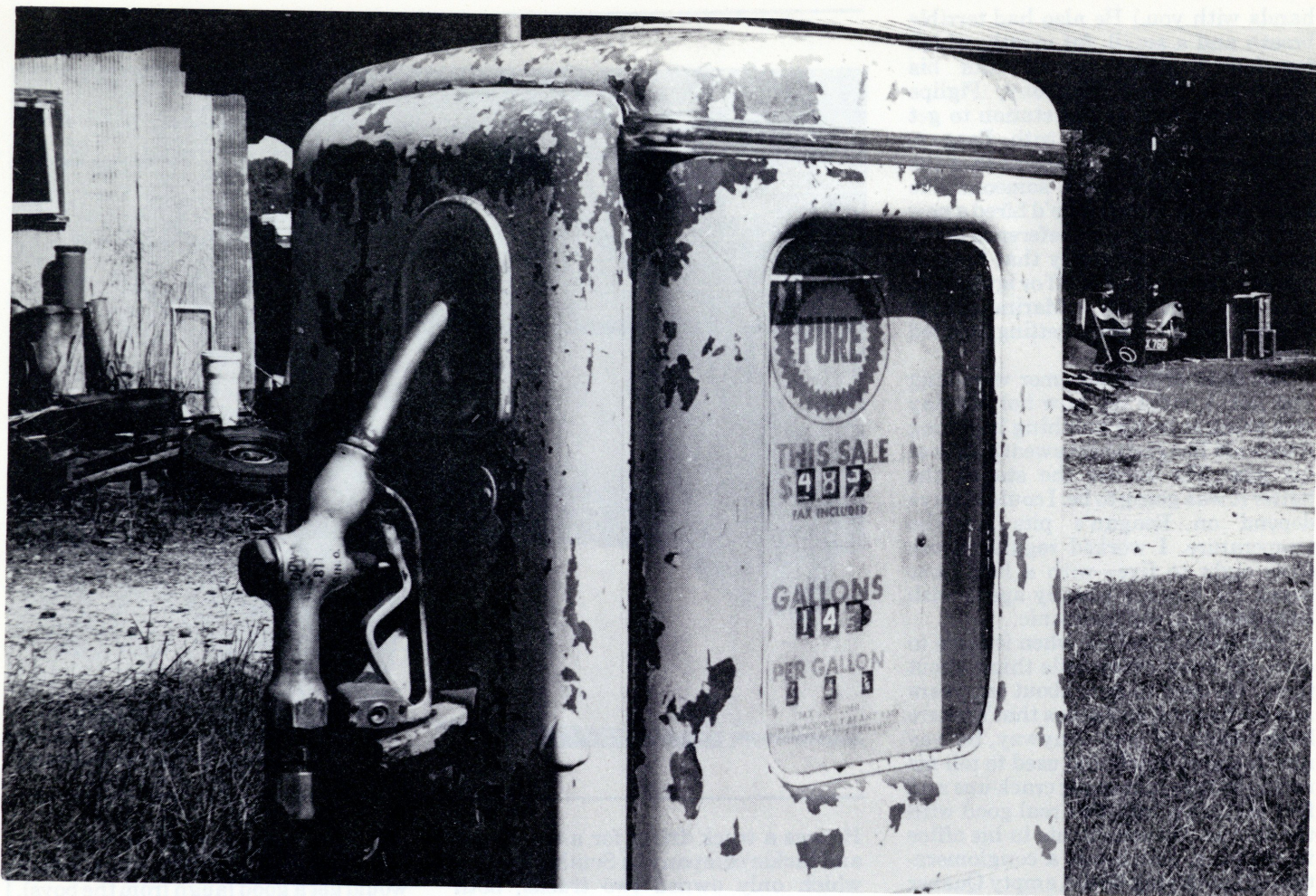


Photo by Wanda Kenton

AFTER THE RAIN

The rain trickles through the pipe
And falls splashing to the ground,
Cold gutter tears of a dream.
From these,
The rising fog,
So late unthought,
Sizzles in the tiny, hot sparks of fireflies
Glittering at a thousand different places,
With a thousand different hues and colors,
Impossible to comprehend.
If I could follow just one insect
As he blinks himself known
Like some hero
Revealed only through an occasional flash of bravery,
Now near the ground,
Now treetop high,
Until his light is lost in the mist,
Perhaps,
From this simple act,
Would follow peace.

—Steve Glaze



A POOHVILLE SUMMER

FICTION by Ken Taylor

I remember the summer a couple of years ago when I worked at this Texaco station, right off the interstate, in a little town called Poohville, South Carolina. Poohville is a town not on the map, located thirty miles from the Marine base, Ft. Eagle, where they process and test warheads and missiles. I've lived in this town all my life but usually have spent the summers, ever since my father was killed in 'Nam, at my Uncle Chris's house in Milwaukee. I guess Momma sent me there partly to get me out of Poohville for a little change of pace, and partly because she thought I might turn queer, hanging around her and my older sisters all the time. She knew that if her brother Chris couldn't make a man out of me no one could. This particular summer I had to work. I was eighteen and everything I wanted cost

money, especially the stereo I dreamed of over at Richard's Sounds. I kind of regretted not being able to check out Milwaukee this summer, because there was a lot to see in the day and a lot to do at night—always excitement. Beer was only a dollar and a quarter a six there, and that was another little commodity that tended to empty my pockets while I was home. Anyway, after about a week of "beating the bushes," as they say in Poohville, I finally got a job at the Texaco owned by Mr. Reagan.

Dewey Reagan was a tall, old dude with a little bit of a beer gut (a pearl beer gut, I might add) which loved to peep at you with one hairy eye—moving in and out under a greasy pinstriped shirt with a star on the chest and a pocketful of pens, pencils, Doral cigarettes, matches, this week's lottery tickets, and a tire gauge. He wore green,

straight-legged pants, cuffed at the ends and baggy in the seat, with pockets deep and dirty enough to plant pine trees in. Riding on his right hip, gleaming in the sun like a six-shooter on a gunslinger, was his money changer, which he could operate just about as quickly. If Dewey Reagan had one outstanding talent in life, it was "ching-chinging" nickels, dimes, and quarters out of that gadget. Completing his daily wardrobe was a pair of military shoes, saturated in 10W40 and radiator fluid, which he obtained for free from his good buddy Sgt. Bacon from Ft. Eagle. "Sgt. Figlips," as all the boys at the Fort called him behind his back, was a drill instructor with a loud voice, hot temper, and strong grip. (He's the kind of guy nobody misses at a party—the big, loud guy who tries to break your fingers when he shakes

hands with you.) He also had terrible breath and a small, fat mouth, which together I guess earned him his nickname. Every Thursday, Piglips would come over to the station to get gas or shoot the bull with Reagan, always making the comment that the Marines wouldn't have someone like me, or asking Dewey if he'd hired a new girl to work for him (in reference to my hair which wasn't really that long). I just kind of laughed it off or ignored it. Any comment from a Marine named Piglips wasn't worth getting excited about.

The days of that summer were long and hot. I could tell how hot the day was going to be by watching how long it took old Reagan to get sweat stains at his pits. The earlier the stains, the hotter it was going to be. I could always depend on Reagan's pits for the temperature. I worked regular hours from eight to five—with a half hour break for lunch I usually spent with Sam Morgan, the mechanic.

Sam had it together when it came to cars. He knew every little thing about them. He used to race about ten years ago (so he said) so I guess that's where he got to know cars. Anyway, he was nice to me at lunch and used to tell me racing stories, about big crack-ups and fast pit crews, and was real good with the details. We usually ate in his office in the back, which was a conglomeration of spark plug boxes, empty Quaker State cans, grease, and comparable stacks of *Popular Mechanics* and *Penthouse*. He had the girl of the month hanging on the wall behind his desk, and a calendar of real cuties on his door. Every month brought new surprises. He would tell me that while he was racing, he used to meet all kinds of girls like those, especially ones that looked like Miss August (he really liked Miss August). Every day that I came out of Sam's office, especially if one or two of his buddies were around, old Reagan would ask me if I had a screwdriver in my pocket or had I been looking at Sam's pretty little pictures again. Those pictures never did anything for me. Old Reagan just liked to embarrass me, that's all.

Reagan had a little band of friends who wandered in from time to time, and always managed to show up on Fridays to gripe about their jobs, taxes, bills, and colored people. They also talked about women and their personal experiences from the previous weekend and expectations for the one coming up. Everyone knew that the others were lying, but each listened with the intensity of a child believing in a ghost story. John Ed Perkins was the best orator of Saturday night encounters and was the least likely to have actually had them.

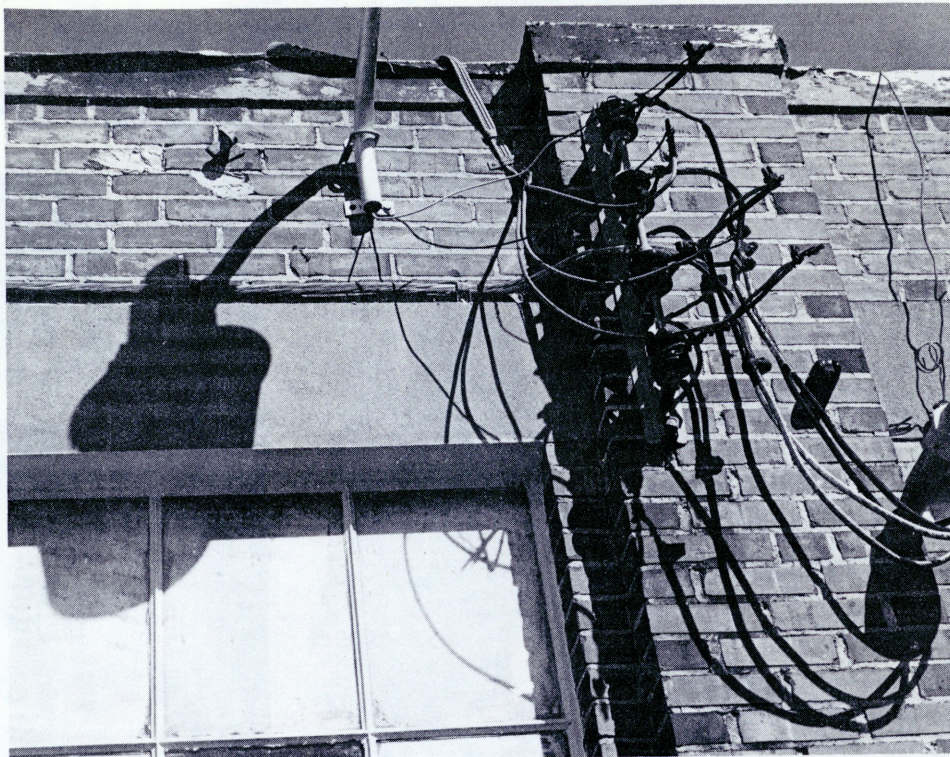


Photo by Martin Buchanan

He was a truck driver for a small bait and tackle company in South Carolina which only owned two trucks, both short of eighteen wheels (which you figured he drove, by his stories). He was big on C.B.'s and used the lingo all the time when he talked. He referred to women as "beavers," county cops as "local yokels," gasoline as "motion lotion," and had a variety of numbers and codes referring to different situations and objects. He also took great pride in his handle, "Magic Fingers." Anyway John Ed was about a hundred pounds overweight and liked to chew Redman tobacco (not much of a lady's man in my opinion).

The other members of the gang were: old man Scruggs, a soybean farmer who smoked a pipe, and liked to sit by the sunglasses, lighter flints, and Ever-Readys to listen to everyone talk each Friday; Abby Simms, the liquor store owner, who usually brought a bottle of George Dickell every Friday for them to sip on while they gabbed; Oscar Johnson, who had a reserved spot to sit on over by the credit card machine, and loved to eat peanuts and leave the shells for me to sweep; and last but not least, Shorty Rogers, the owner of a fast fifty-five Chevrolet who loved to buy lottery tickets. Shorty was all the time trying to get me to buy lottery tickets. He'd tell me that if I won just once, I could buy the stereo I was saving for,

and then he could come over and play his Ester Lewis records on it (which would get a good laugh from the boys). I just ignored him and pretended I was busy, like I always did every Friday when they'd start talking. Business was pretty slow on Friday afternoons, but I didn't too much like standing around to be the butt of their jokes any more than I had to.

I really didn't do much around the station besides pump gas and check oil, but I took pride in what I did. I guess I had to, to survive at a dump like that. I had to take a lot of crap from Reagan and the boys, but I had one big inspiration waiting for me at Richard's Sounds—a big fat stereo. Not one of those stereos that have a radio, turntable, and tape player all crammed into a little box with some Japanese name on the front, but a *real* stereo. The one I had in mind was a five hundred dollar piece of audio technology capable of ruining my and the rest of Poohville's ears for life. I wanted to be able to get Mr. Jenkins, who was half-deaf and lived across town, to call and ask me to turn it down a bit. Ester Lewis would never come near this baby. I didn't ever tell the boys around the station how much it cost or they'd never let me hear the end of it. They were too narrow-minded to understand that life involved more than just telling stories and griping around the station.

The summer dragged on and on. Each day was pretty much the same routine—pump gas, check oil, wash windshields, eat lunch with Sam, pump gas, clean up, and go home. Every day brought me closer to my stereo, but every day it seemed more like I'd never get it. Once in a while a pretty girl or an expensive sports car would come into the station to help break the monotony, but they were few and far between. Life went on like this until the day came that made my entire summer, ended my torment at the Texaco, and left me in a state of shock and disbelief for weeks.

It was a Friday and a real hot one too. It was only nine o'clock and old Reagan already had pit stains. We were still generally setting things up when the day "started off with a bang"—literally. This lady of about twenty-two, blonde, and very good-looking, came wheeling in on her ten-speed over by the air-pump. Since I didn't have anything to do at the time and was glad for it, I offered to help put some air in her tires. Well, this young lady was one of those libbers and was "very capable of handling it myself," as she said. I could tell she was that way pretty much when I walked over there, because she wasn't wearing any bra. She gave the machine a quick gander and then rang the numbers up to ninety before she started putting air in. After about two "ring-ding, ring-dings" her front tire exploded with a wham! Old Reagan came rushing out of the back, thinking that Ft. Eagle had misfired one of their missiles and hit his station. When he saw that girl standing there with her front tire busted, he fell over the windshield wiper display and landed in the flowers by the front door. He lay on his back, holding his sides and kicking his legs like a little baby, and laughing like a mule gasping for air. I kind of lost it too, but managed to say "Come back now!" while she limped her bike down the road saying words I never heard a pretty girl say before.

The rest of the day went pretty quick after that. The wind picked up a little and brought a nice, cool breeze into the station and made the afternoon bearable. Sam told a good story at lunch and had a couple of new pictures on the wall, which always was pretty interesting (though it never did anything for me). By around two o'clock the day slowed down, which it always does about that time of day, and most of the boys were in for their weekly bull session. Everyone but Shorty was there, and Simms said he would be there directly. He had gone for a ride with his good buddy Luke Hornsby to watch the numbers turn over for the second time in Luke's old Buick. Reagan told the morning's story to everyone

anyway and had them laughing for a good while. He doctored up the details to make it sound even better, but really didn't need to. After they got over the story, old Reagan told me to go clean the ladies' restroom, since business was slow. About that time, old man Scruggs slipped in his two bits for the afternoon by telling me that I didn't need to knock to see if anyone was in there—I could pass for a girl anyway with my hair. That brought on laughter and comments directed my way, which I didn't stay around to listen to.

While I was mopping the floor, Shorty pulled up (at least I thought it was Shorty by the sound of the pipes of his car). Shorty always had something new done to his car, so I stuck my head out the door to check out this week's addition. Only I didn't see Shorty and his Chevy, but rather a big, black van with big pipes, wide tires, and a mural of clouds and lightning on the side. Across the top it had written in big fancy letters: "The Rolling Thunder Review." It took me a second to pick my jaw up off the ground, to go gaze at the work of automotive mastery. The words on the side looked familiar, but I couldn't place where I had seen them before. Anyway, the van didn't stop for gas, it just went "ring-ding, ring-ding" across the hose and parked by the Coca-Cola and Lance Peanut machines, near the men's restroom.

I got a glimpse of the driver, who had long hair, a beard, and mirrored sunglasses. I guess old Reagan saw him too, and high-stepped out of the front office where all the boys were, to tell the guy that the men's room was out of order. It wasn't really out of order; Reagan just didn't want hippy-types, blacks, or any other people that he didn't like using it. This was standard procedure for old Reagan, especially when his buddies were around. The driver and a couple of other guys, all clad in denim, got out of the van and headed for the refreshment machines like they didn't even hear Reagan, which didn't cool the heat under his arms one bit. Then a guy came out of the back, sipping a bottle of Blue Nun, and wearing a large white brimmed hat with a red bandana wrapped around it. He also was wearing a denim outfit and had long, black, curly hair, a four-day beard, and a gold earring in his left ear. I recognized him and nearly had a coronary. I had to shake my head a couple of times and wipe my eyes to see if I was actually seeing,—in Poohville, South Carolina—Bob Dylan. It was him, and he was walking towards the men's bathroom. All old Reagan knew about this guy was that he had long hair, came out of a hippy van, looked dirty, and was not going to use his bathroom.

As soon as Dylan took a few steps in that direction, Reagan began chewing him out, telling him that the bathroom was out of order, and that if he continued to hang around here, Reagan would call the police. About the time he got the last words out of his mouth, there was a familiar sound of woosh from behind the door, and out stepped Oscar Johnson zipping his fly. He had gone, without Reagan's knowing it, before Dylan and his band showed up. Dylan just gave Reagan a cold stare and said that he simply wanted directions for the quickest way to the Ramsey Hotel in Columbia. Reagan was half cussing at Johnson for making a fool out of him and really didn't hear, and stormed back to the office shouting that they were loitering and that he was calling the police.

While old Reagan was fumbling with the phone, I quickly apologized to Mr. Dylan (as I called him) and told him the fastest way to the Ramsey. I also added (and was very proud of myself for doing so) that I'd heard the King's Inn had better service and that it was on this side of Columbia, if they didn't have reservations. He seemed pleased and asked my name and why I was working at a place like this with a bunch of old cooneys. I told him my name, and that I was working to earn money for a stereo and that I almost had enough and would be able to leave shortly. He told me to stay there, and returned with something in his hand. He handed me six crisp bills with Ben Franklin on the front and a one followed by two zeros on each corner. I never liked Ben Franklin better in my whole life! He also handed me his latest album and told me to break in my new stereo with it. He waved good-bye and pulled out before I could say thanks, or good-bye, or could gulp or anything.

After I convinced myself that the episode had taken place, I took off my green hat with the red star and my coveralls. I looked at old Ben again and then stuffed the bills into my pocket. I handed the greasy pile of work clothes to Shorty who was just pulling up at the time with new back tires on his car and Luke riding shotgun. I told him to give them to Reagan and tell him that I quit. Before he could reply, I was walking to the road. I checked my pockets one more time and smiled at Ben Franklin with thanks that it was a Poohville summer.





The Pony

Jonathan Hughes

The First Day

He stands stock stone still in the dust
Watching satin skin smooth caper prance;
Tensile muscle white bone, how it flows;
Composing one Helluva dance!
On and on, up and on, round around —
He sees Satan—now Uriel. Turn —
They do battle, they sport; they exist.
'Tis a vision; grey phophecy true.
Resurgence—new blood to the past!
Tugs a wire in one water pipe arm
As the image paints dreams — of a hue.
Comforts, yes! But grey shadows alarm.

Once a time, once the thought, once a child —
Plastic skin — binding tissue and bone.
Thoughts of tendon and marrow and blood —
Inner world; pristine magic, now grown.
Now these versions of self are made real
In the eyes of a boy. Now they caper and trip;
In a golden dust day, do they dance.
Mighty eagles — soar. Now, swallows, dip!
And a cloud rises warm from the heart,
Now a thought in his red balloon head:
Of the glamour admittedly lacking,
Of the magic sufficiently bled.
'Tis salvation — the smell of a friend;
Succinct succor. To crazy dream heights,
He'll be led on the tongue of the wind;
On fanciful free-for-all flights!

Freedom once longed for — attained;
The colt free to bolt for the blue,
And to flee on a wild summer breath—
But the palm on the fence senses true.

How the wild western wind cools the skin
While a sunken heart swelters and glows—
Weathers skin from the inside, and saddens
As it ponders the veteran snows!
How they creep, cover gold with their greys;
Change the vessels to icicle cold:
Now they ripple and surge 'neath the grasses;
Soon they stagnate; they pale; they grow old.

In the diamond eye see a gem grow
As it dances — hello to the sun!
Now the joy overflows; and it trails,
Slowly dustward; ebb of life. Freedom won.

Oh, he'd like to leap over that fence,
Clutching lightning and riding him wild;
But the air freezes warm, and the fence
Burns as ice in the mind of a child.

The Second Day

Now the sphere has grown dark —
Penumbral quiescence. Now bright
Fair Diana, green cheese, and a frail
Fairy schooner plows magical night.
Thus a lad, now a merlin, now sprite,
Now a demon, now dreaming; he plies
Out of terrible night, running forms
Of equestrian mist in the skies.
Ever his, now the fancy that blooms.
If God be a god, He cannot
Deny what is life to a lad —
Crystal vision — resplendently hot,
Braving trials of "Why is?" and "How?"
Now the forces of night dare not stir.
Nor do demons in play foster fear —
Nor frail spirits bright labors deter.
For he dreams and his spirit gives way
To a vision much mightier still
Than his physics, his heart, his white soul
And the witchery smothers his will.

Now the shimmering monster — the day —
Instinctively rears its bright head,
And night birds flee far to the west,
The passions of the night by them led.
And awash in the waftage of day
Is the lad. Once a ravenous pyre,
Burning cooler, but deep in his sleep,
Moonlit heavens, black embers aspire.

In a first strident song of the day,
Joining air nymph and forest beast wild,
Sings the breath of one equine, alive
In the fresh, dawning dream of a child,
Testing earth with one hoof and a snort,
Clips the life-veins of green humored grass,

And with blood on his breath and the sun
In his eye, watches morning clouds pass.
But a dream; he awakes, and the dew
Tingles still on the sun-crust skin.
From a dream sheltered deep in his breast,
To the sun, "Let the drama begin."

Sing a first strident song of the day!
Here an air nymph and here a beast wild
Feel the breath of the pony alive.
This, the fresh dawning day of a child,
Tests the earth; lifts a hoof; gives a snort;
Clips great bunches of wet morning grass
And with dew on his breath, watch the sun

In his eye as the morning hours pass:
 'Tis no dream; as the boy watches long—
 Oh, this moment a fossil someday—
 Then uncouched and examined for truth,
 Once exhausted, is cartoned away.

But for now it's a day— just a day.
 And no truth begs for freedom or voice;
 No Apollo, no Delphi, no oracle bone.
 He would live— he will die by his choice.

Oh, his life knows ethereal bounds,
 But content— let mortality chide.
 He will stand in the day and live bravely;
 See him stand in the sunlight and hide.

But the golden world sails as it rose;
 From the void to the void, it must go.
 And the day lingers long past her exit
 In a sweltering, somnolent glow.
 Soon the beast disappears in the darkness.
 Now a whisper of breath brings the night.
 And the day seems a boy's fruitless vigil
 For the dreams now escape with the light.



Photo by Robert Hinkle

The Third Day

Up at dawn, canyon yawn, insect heartbeat;
 Now the laboring sun crawls— it blooms.

As the season of night passes slowly,
 So that star its bright duty assumes.
 And the yellows of morning melt nightshades;
 Oh, the indigo beasts they consume —
 Birthing fair Phoenix creatures in ashes.
 Clearing censers, they flee from the tomb.

And a pony stone silent and still,
 Stands a vigil alone and alone
 Over kingdoms of bestial devising;
 Equine kings harbor forces unknown.

For it's "hey," and it's "ho"; private sunstorms
 Scamper lizardly over the rills.
 Mustang thund'rings from violet distance
 Echo darkly from hallowed hills.
 Heated breezes incense the great ceiling,
 Over infinite plains, the sweet breath;
 And the lightnings wink wide wayward arrows—
 Each shaft an insentient death.

Oh, a corpse is abroad; yes, he ranges —
 Sweat wet leather and matted mane locks,
 Prairie's milk; sweet, eternally draining
 Dust air. O, a thousand bright shocks —
 As you pray, noble lad; quake and pray,
 As you cross the wide gulf —fairy span —
 The stuff made of dreams —hardly seems
 The forever goodbye of a man.
 For today is today is tomorrow,
 And the sunset will echo its rise
 As a lad's golden vision holds softly
 Bright tomorrows in ripening eyes.

It is truth! Walls fall victim to passion;
 Burning battlements drop of their weight.
 Picket fences bow, too, to advances.
 Oh, they suffer a terrible fate:
 Altar stones lay ahead in the rapage
 And the sweltering fruit of the tree
 In darkening crosses dethroned
 Signal straining humanity free;
 And the holy campaign, never ending,
 Drives bright soldiers to valleys of sky;
 And the clouds hide the fate unbetold them
 As they herald the peak still and high.

But the herald light bleaches red marrow,
 And bright bone cards the fleece of the sky—
 For they threatened the door of fair heaven,
 And now high away will they lie.

In a circle, bright circle of sunlight,
 Only he and his dream brave the cold,

And the dream—half in fear of his dreamer,
In his dreaming increasingly bold—
Breathes warm mist and thinks oaths at the sunshine—
Virgin gold, bright from regions unknown.
He refuses prophetic stillness—
A profoundly autonomous roan.

But the liquid floods pores and grows hot,
And his essence seeps salty and slick,
And his core throbs with silver sensations —
Muscle signal — alarum, dull, quick.
And hard tendons stretch static excitement;
Every inch of his boy-buoyant frame
Seems to float, yet the earth crushes downward,
An ennobled affection to tame.

Oh, flash, branded heavens; be damned!
He will ride till he rides levin meek;
Clutching leather and matted mane locks,
Seizing lightning: the beast he will pique.

Do it now, never better! Go now!
Golden lad, 'tis the moment to glow.
Inching forward —no tree to delay;
It's brighter the closer you go.
And a whisp —silver nostrils. A knife.
Gilt warrior blade from above,
Sparkle deathly —no fear now! O, Valiance,
The veteran brother to love.

"Palmer's kiss," as they said and they die.
But a boy's kiss joins bloods and not hearts;
And a hand hot with soul leaves its touch
On most hallowed and Stygian parts.
But bright blades will drink blood, and they do;
In no refuge may mortals, we, hide.
'Tis the better — preferred dissolution
With a palm on the sword by our side.

Bright believers, pray Mornings, Amen!

Hallowed altars, bright stridents, atone!
And the beast and the boy and the morning—
Fated fellows; dark dreamers; alone —

Pushing, surgence inside —gaging rise!
And Amen... and Amen...and Amen...
Breath away, do not chasten! Damned lungs —
Amen, and Amen —say again!

Oh, the day—and away—silver scream!
Wild yahoo — yeah, yahoo! Wayahoo!
Thunder crashes — and fear — God — fear —
Way — yahoo — Oh, yahoo — oh, yahoo ...

Grinning devil — Behind — Oh, behind.
Oh, my God; Oh, my God; Oh, my — Oh,
Life line lighting — rolls down, crashing round.
Oh — my — oh, the new stream that does flow.

Sun — dry the earth, bucket hollow.
Soon — the life will spring out of the soil:
Silent youth, sing the song of the sower;
Trenchant nature, now wither, now moil.

Nevermind the bright pass, the dark future—
Now is sun silk in nature made red.
And a last strident beam of the daylight
Goldenly enters his head.

The Epilogue

And the rest of the day is a jumble —
Is a jumble. What rest will he find?
Silent birdsong — and relative sorrow.
Death to death — unto those of his kind.

Leaden gift and the mourning is over;
Leaden life and the red runs again.
Oh, no day served its purpose more sweetly—
And no day shall bear witness again...

To the death of a boy and his pony,
To the flowing of laughter and pain.
These things are for those who will listen,
And never bear witness again.

These things have I told! who will listen?
And never bear witness again.

—Jon Hughes





THE IRON MASK

THE MAN BEHIND THE IRON MASK EXISTING ONLY AT THE WILL OF THOSE MINDS THAT HE HAUNTS AT NIGHT. HAUNTS WITH A MALIGNANT FEAR OF ALL THINGS; A GUILT WHICH REFUSES TO SUBSIDE, INCREASING IN STRENGTH WITH EACH PASSING DAY.

READY.

BEHOLD THE MARTYR THAT SITS BEFORE US, BLACK HOOD DRAPED OVER HIS NON-FEARING FACE. PHYSICALLY THE STOIC, EMOTIONS DRAINED OR NONEXISTENT; ALOOF TO THE BASICS OF HUMAN NATURE. MENTALLY THOUGHTS RACE ACROSS HIS MIND: REGRETS OF A LIFE NOW FADING, THOUGHTS OF ANOTHER WORLD TO COME. AIM.

MOUNTING WAVES OF SHOCK SLITHER UP THE SPINE, SLOWLY GAINING CONTROL OF THE BRAIN, BODY AND SOUL. FIRE.

THE BULLETS SLICE THROUGH THE AIR A SPLIT SECOND TO EVALUATE A USELESS LIFE, YET EVEN NOW DEATH SEEMS FAR AWAY.

- MAURICE SNELLING

Revelation in an Amusement Park

FICTION

by Leslie Blackmon

"Cold," I thought. "I am cold, and I am miserable and tired here. This much I can admit to myself now. Now, while Joey is momentarily occupied, I can allow my utterly selfish and blatantly objective self to admit that I actually hate being here. But soon I'll have to resume my act—that of pretending to love this place, these people, these all too colorful surroundings that seem ridiculously bizarre. I will resume the act because Joey must not sense that I am not one with him—partner in unconfined delirium."

I sat on the bare cement bench next to the trash dispenser which was painted to look like a giant rabbit and watched as Joey took a second turn on the miniature race cars. I focused on my son with exaggerated interest, hoping to forget the cheap surroundings of the fairground. It seemed strange to be there in the dead of winter. I usually associated carnivals with baking sidewalks and teeming crowds rather than the quiet milling handfuls of chilled bodies that were here today. But Joey had wanted to come, so here we were at an almost deserted fairground that made me feel as if I were part of a five-year-old's nightmare. Thoughts of childhood, especially of my own happy one, always made me feel alienated from Joey. But in comparison with this horrible excuse for a day at the fair, the glaring differences between him and me became painfully obvious. But Joey remained unaware of the differences, and so I was able to pretend that perhaps they didn't exist.

Joey turned in the last of his coupons and sped off for his last ride, repeatedly thrusting his hand onto the horn of the tiny vehicle. I saw the ticket man smile as he drove off—the same smile I had grown to expect now—a mixture of pity and pride—pity for the condition of my

retarded son and pride that *he* had helped to bring a little joy to the unfortunate boy.

The smile aroused my anger. How the hell dared he think *that* was joy? My son was 17 years old. He should have been driving a *real* car by now—one that he could guide himself, one that would take him anywhere he chose instead of leading him along a predetermined track that always led him back to the point of his departure, even one in which he could have been killed. Even death, or the challenge of evading it, was more savory than Joey's existence, for his existence was only a void—a vacuum of babbles, movements, grunts, and hugs. Who was he? My *son*—I had to repeat it again and again, sometimes every time I looked at him, to remind myself that he was of *me*—like *me* in some elusive way.

Joey seemed to be suspended there—laughing and blowing that damned horn. He and I were linked somehow—biologically? I thought of a long forgotten lesson on DNA and RNA; those same genes that had done a wild tango years ago at Joey's conception were still there somewhere within me, and their partners were in Joey. Why couldn't they send a spark of insight to me through the aorta or something? Within that body—Joey was small but perfectly formed—was a soul, and I, his own mother—his giver of life, could not reach it. I might just as well have tried to relate to the huge grinning Peter Cottontail next to me. I could have smiled at, laughed with, and cuddled that instrument for garbage disposal as easily as I could attend my son without having felt any more ridiculous. But that dempsy-dumpster with an eternal smile on his face had no soul, and my son did. This was not how I wanted things—I had tried desperately to change things. I loved Joey dearly, but he remained inaccessible.

Despite his "unfortunate" condition, Joey seemed very happy. He'd never

had many friends. I guess the kids couldn't relate to him either. But this had never bothered Joey. He only smiled and laughed at the taunts of the other kids. He was like that. It tore me apart to hear older children scream "Ree-tard, uh-uh" at Joey. I had always felt like killing them. I could have plunged a knife through each of their skulls and not have felt any remorse. But Joey just smiled that blank, unchanging grin (so sadly like that of my rabbit friend's) and responded with a soft "uh."

Worse still were the times when I scolded him. Never had I seen Joey exhibit contempt for me. Even in the face of unjust punishment, he grinned and retained that passive expression. Then I would cry and feel guilty and he would come to me and wipe the tears away, clumsily patting my head. How could I know him? Why did he never get angry with me? I couldn't live with him; he was too good.

Joey seemed so happy, but surely he couldn't be—not *really*. I wanted him to grow, to fit in, and to make friends. That's why I had sent him to the Bradley School for the Mentally Retarded. I had taken him there at the beginning of their last fall term and left him there until the start of Christmas vacation, as they had suggested. I had trusted them, with their smiles that were much like that of the ticket man. There was the same smug pity in their eyes, but they had been so understanding of my feelings of isolation. The sights and sounds of the fairground faded as I remembered the trip to the school just last week to pick Joey up for his holiday. The all too vivid memory played before my mind's eye like a TV rerun.

The school was isolated—a modern structure perched atop a hill and placed well off of the deserted road that passed in front of it. I stepped from my car and became acutely aware of the silence.

This, I supposed, was the preferred atmosphere—fresh air and open space.

—*THIS IS DEPRESSING, JOEY ALWAYS LOVED TO WATCH THE PEOPLE WALK BY, TO WATCH THE CARS GO BY AND LISTEN TO THEIR HORNS.*—

The building was very modern and had no trees. The windows were the type one could not see into. Their glaring reflection of the outside world always reminded me of the glaze in a blind man's eyes—wide open but incapable of assimilating any light. I got the impression that I was being observed through these monstrous lenses; the whole building was a blind monster inside whom dwelt teams of specialists who were observing me as I approached. What was their diagnosis? Perhaps I was somehow responsible for Joey's condition, and they mercifully withheld this information from me, as doctors withhold things from dying patients.

Like a Christian martyr marching to the portals of the lion's den, I strode to the largest of the "eyes," each of my steps in time with the sound of the chain on the flagpole clanging in the wind.

—*I'VE GOTTEN MY NIGHTMARES CONFUSED. LIONS DON'T CLANK CHAINS, BUT WHO THE HELL DOES?*—

I stepped into the lobby; it was warmer than the December weather outside, but its warmth was crisp and impersonal. To my right was a waiting room with colored plastic chairs—orange, yellow, and blue ones. Directly in front of me was the school office. Through the glass partition a secretary was smiling and motioning for me to

enter. I entered through the noiselessly opening door and gave her my name. I was told to wait outside.

I chose a blue chair, wondering if that said anything about my personality. Perhaps this was the initial test. I glanced up to make sure the secretary had not made special notice of my choice of colors. She was busy typing.

A bulletin board in the room showed a huge Christmas tree with pictures of each child for ornaments. I studied this for some time. There were some 347 students enrolled at the school, ranging in age from three to thirty-two. I looked at them, trying to judge from their pictures the severity of their conditions. Turning to sit again, I chose a yellow chair. Ha! That would throw them off my track!

I found that another woman had joined me. She was overweight with dark, oily hair that hung into her face and fell over thick black glasses. I smiled at her and noticed she'd also chosen a yellow chair.

"Are you here to pick up your child?" I asked.

She nodded.

I felt rather uncomfortable but had a queer sense of identity with this woman who sat clutching her white vinyl handbag. "Has your child been here long?"

"Four years."

"Well," I said, "Joey is new. He just started this fall."

No response.

"Does your child like it here?"

The woman looked up, plainly annoyed. "She don't know what she likes—at least she don't tell nobody."

"Oh." So crumbled my test in diplomacy.

"Mrs. Cramer, Mrs. Fulton will see you now," the smiling secretary said.

I nodded good-bye to the other woman who seemed to take no notice of my exit.

The secretary showed me into Mrs. Fulton's office where I shook hands with the small, neat woman who looked exactly as I remembered her from the first interview. Like the building, she had a very updated look. From the cuffs of her knit pants to the tips of her green formica earrings, she was competently in touch with the times. As she took my hand and asked the secretary to bring in Joey's file, I imagined a magazine ad with Mrs. Fulton's picture and the caption—"Our new and improved model, the F13. Lends an air of efficiency to any business office. Easy care and maintenance, and oh!—so versatile!" I hoped that there were no machines around measuring my brain waves, for they'd certainly condemn me as being completely abnormal.

Mrs. Fulton was offering me a styrofoam cup full of steaming instant coffee which I gratefully accepted. She studied Joey's file and addressed me in her administrator's voice—businesslike but sympathetic. I marveled at the delicate balance she had achieved between the two; I would have to include this nifty feature in the ad campaign.

"Mrs. Cramer, we all dearly love Joey. He is a very well-tempered child. Oh, he has given us a few problems, but on the whole he is a dear child."

"What kind of trouble? Joey's always been perfectly behaved around home."

"Oh, minor occurrences, I assure you."

"Oh, . . ."

"Mrs. Cramer, we have been testing Joey and have categorized him according to the results of the tests. We place all of our students into one of two categories—educable or trainable. We have placed Joey into the trainable group. This means that Joey can be taught a skill—say along the lines of masonry, shoe repair—you know, manual jobs. However, we feel that he is incapable of dealing with abstract concepts—mathematics, literature, and the like. The trainable children usually remain here until approximately age 28 at which time they will have acquired a saleable skill, while the educable children go on to vocational schools and end up in white-collar jobs such as clerical or secretarial positions."

"I see."

"This all comes much later on, of course. But Joey has made nice progress—very nice. He has adjusted to this environment very well. Would you



Photo by Wanda Kenton

like to observe Joey before today's classes end?"

"Why yes, I'd like that."

"First I thought we'd have lunch. You must be hungry."

She led me to the school cafeteria where we sat on tiny chairs and ate our balanced meals of fish, green beans, rolls, and applesauce. Half of the school's students were downing their meals along with us. (Joey was not there at that hour.) The children came in two sizes—the very small and the very large. I was amazed at the absence of average-sized children. The tiny ones were unusually active except for those of them that were confined to wheel chairs. The large ones were further divided into two groups: the timid ones and the boisterous ones. The more active ones laughed a great deal. They seemed very happy and open, and were the center of attention for most of the harried teachers and aides who were continually shushing them and imploring them to eat quietly. I found them amusing and they cheered me up considerably. I hoped that Joey had befriended one of these happy giants. They seemed a lot like Joey—happy and uninhibited. I realized Mrs. Fulton was whispering something to me.

"We do have some very severe cases here. They are assigned to special classes—for instance, those students over there."

She pointed to the table of laughing giants, and I felt a little dismayed at my inept judgment. "But they seem to be the happiest students here."

"They are quite unaware of their position within the school—indeed within the world. We just attempt to keep them comfortable. They are however, neither educable nor trainable."

I tried to forget that the behavior of these students bore a similarity to Joey's.

After lunch, Mrs. Fulton led me from the cafeteria and down a corridor. We came to Joey's classroom and she led me to the observation booth. It occurred to me that I was now behind one of those "monster eyes"—looking at my own son—observing and judging his actions.

Joey was seated at a small table coloring. He was so small. He looked like a ten-year-old instead of a boy of 17. The children in the class were engaged in different tasks—none of them associating much with the others. The teacher ambled from one to another. I watched as she approached Joey and spoke to him. He stared blankly at her and dropped his crayon. She tried to give it back, but he only shook his head

and refused to continue. She patted his head and turned away. Joey just sat there.

"We find that the attention span for any one activity is limited. Consequently, we have a fast-moving schedule within the classroom. We don't expect the children to continue any activity for too long. They'll start a new activity soon."

Mrs. Fulton continued talking, but I was not listening. Bored? Joey had never seemed bored with anything in his life at home. He'd spent hours coloring or looking through books at home. And he'd never looked so dejected about anything before.

The teacher was calling the children into a circle and distributing what looked like huge yellow shoes.

"Now they'll have a basic skills lesson," Mrs. Fulton was explaining. "They'll learn how to tie their shoes today."

I watched as the children jabbed the plastic-tipped laces at the huge red-ringed eyes of the shoe. Joey crammed the lace through one hole and proceeded to pull it right back out of the same hole again. This he did several times and finally dropped the shoe. The dejected look covered his face again. I frowned. Mrs. Fulton said nothing. The teacher came over to Joey and tried to help him. After several more attempts, he threw the shoe down and uttered an angry "UH!" Then he began to cry. I was shocked. Strangely enough, Joey had not cried since he was a baby, except when he'd been hurt. Suddenly, I wanted to leave.

I had taken Joey home from school and was to bring him back in three weeks. During the past week the change in him had been very apparent, but it was not a good change. He seemed so sad; but hadn't he every right to be sad? I could understand his sadness. Once, he had even gotten angry with me and I had been a little relieved. He was finally reacting "normally". As I watched him buzz around in his miniature car, I realized that this was the first time I'd seen him happy since he'd been home. I felt alienated again. The joy that shone in his face was impossible for me to comprehend; it was wild, complete—the kind of delirium that "normal" people only experience in dreams.

Peter Cottontail was still grinning at me. I felt horribly guilty but didn't know quite why. Suddenly the thought of packing Joey back to Bradley's seemed horribly wrong. It would be like wiping off Peter's grin and replacing it with tears. Tears might *seem* more appropriate for the face of a garbage dispenser, but no one would have dared to paint tears on Peter. No—that crazy grin belonged there, even though there was no logical reason for its being there—had I said "crazy" grin? I was *not* sending him back to Bradley's.

I smiled back at Mr. Cottontail and walked up to the ticket man. "Don't feel sorry for my son," I said. "He's the happiest person I know." I watched as Joey stepped from his car. As he ran to me, I noticed that the car he had chosen was blue. I was smiling at this as I kissed him. He was *my* son after all—we had many things to learn about each other.



Photo by Jeff Young



Towers

PHOTO ESSAY by Wanda Kenton



Towers. Historically they reach back toward the foundations of civilization. But symbolically they are even more glorious, reaching Heavenward as a manifestation of enduring optimism.

Auburn—on campus, in town, and in surrounding areas—is blessed with several of these examples of altitudinal craftsmanship. Some are actually steeples or cupolas, but each bears unique significance.

Samford Tower, built in 1888 on the foundation of a burned out predecessor, stands inexorable against time as the heart of Auburn tradition.

Though its structure remains largely unchanged, its history reflects an evolution—the students beckoned to chapel by Samford's chime years ago or the doughboys awakened by the bell during World War I training would likely have been dumbfounded to have

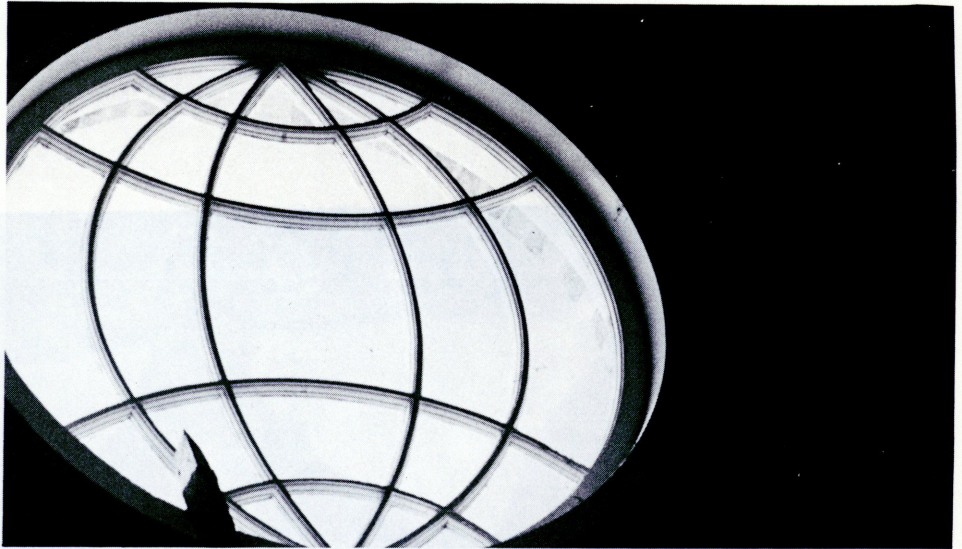
seen the clock face made to look like a Mickey Mouse watch last year. Not that yesteryear's students were puritans; witness the cow they supposedly led up there in 1924 or the time a member of the class of '27 painted the class numerals on the clock face during the intermission of the spring dance.

The tower has pulled a few pranks of its own. In 1967 the bell rang out 480 times in twenty minutes; around 7 a.m.,



no less. Dr. Floyd Vallery recalls hearing that the Auburn Players, using the Samford attic in the school's early days, had to stop rehearsal hourly while the bell overhead tolled.

The University Chapel, in a building variously known as the First Presbyterian Church, the YMCA, and the Players' Theatre during its long history, is the product of a 1976 renovation of a building constructed in 1851. The University has owned the brick and wood structure since 1921.



The Ebenezer Baptist Church, dormant in recent years but currently being renovated, stands on the crest of a Thach Avenue hill. Formed by freed slaves, who no longer chose to sit in the balcony of the Methodist Church, the church was built in 1869.

The Auburn Heritage Association, doing the repair work, plans to use the structure as a public meeting place.



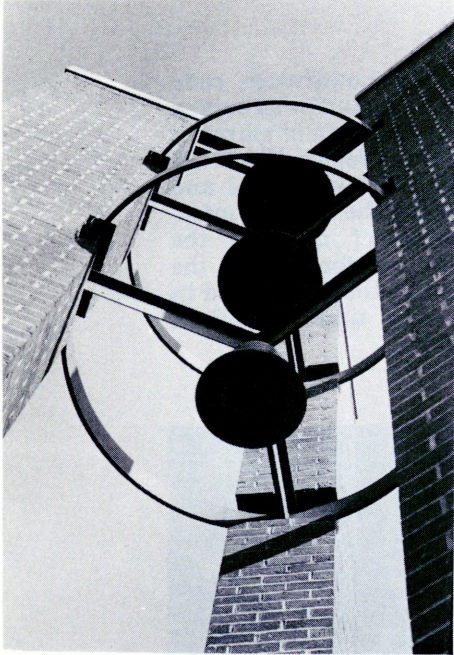
The Lee County Courthouse, common to period architecture, was built in 1896 and is, in the opinion of many, in serious need of major repair. The tower itself contains unsafe staircases and rotten floorboards. The eerie haunted-house appearance of parts of the Courthouse are reinforced by the skeleton in a coffin that has rested in the attic for some time. Its origin remains a mystery.



The Ross Chemical Building is named for Bennett Battle Ross, a dean of Chemistry and Pharmacy in the 1920's. The building has a tower, or more specifically a cupola, that lent itself to this striking photograph bordered by silhouetted magnolia leaves.

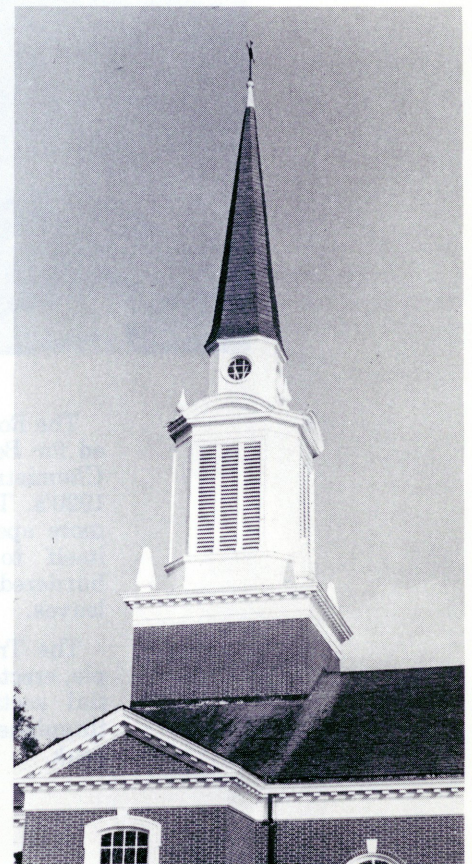
The Trinity Lutheran Church steeple, erected in 1951 in a quiet residential section of Gay Street, is distinguished by a cement cross at its peak.





The contemporary bell tower in front of St. Michael's Catholic Church was constructed in 1966 with the auspices of the Blount family of Tallassee. The bells ring thrice weekdays, twice on Sundays as a "reminder of God's presence."

Rumor has it that the Auburn Presbyterians' most recent steeple, built in 1953, and the Auburn United Methodist's 1955 structure were parties in an inter-congregational competition for height. If so, the Methodists won, say our sources.



their phantom hearts

are churning in the empty chests
of amputees
across america.
every wind animates the scarecrows
who then feel each other's pulses.
no voice is heard here
except the many voices
in the hollowed choir.

me?
i take another shot of television
or make long distance calls
to inner space
that no one answers.

—A.J. Wright

LIES

Love me? You love a woman of your mind's creation.
I'm her life's breath — but she is your lie
no apologies

My reality will overpower your pretty illusion
and you'll wonder

How could I have changed?
You're a child.

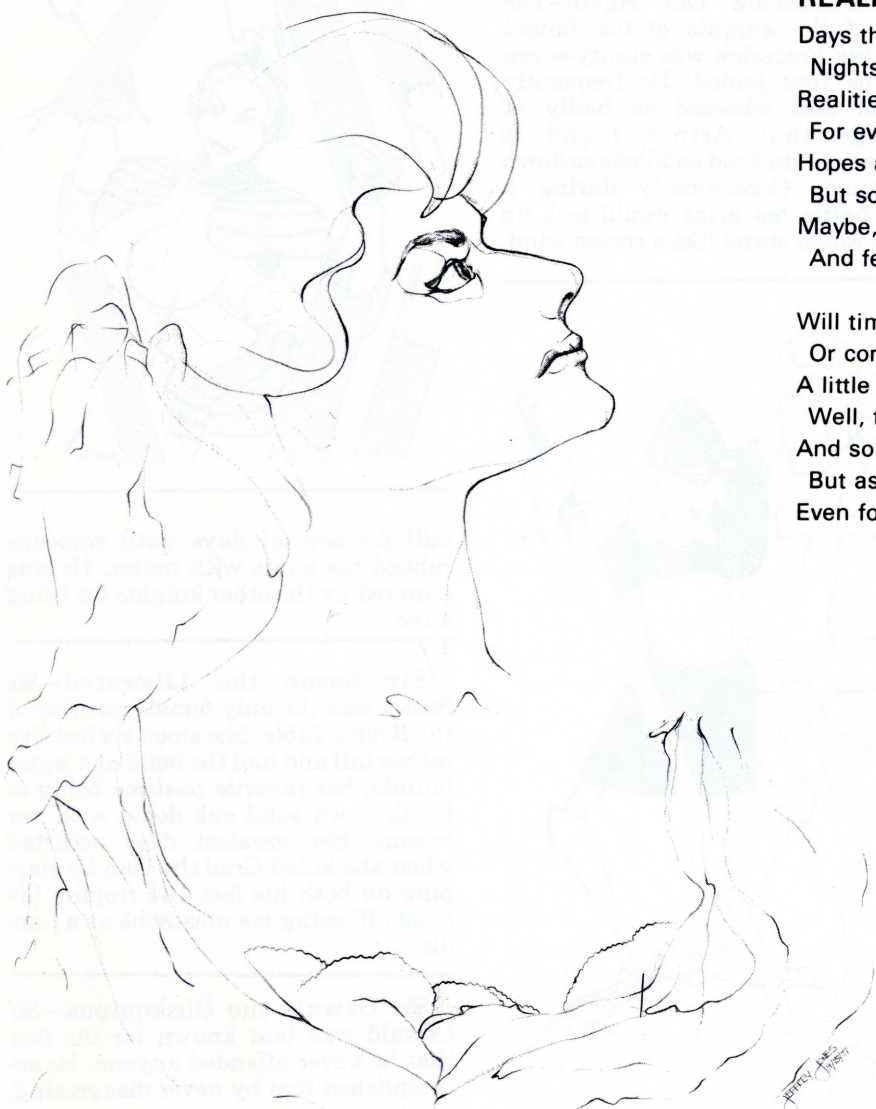
—J. Holmes

REALITIES

Days that are meant for two
Nights that go far too fast
Realities far too real,
For even us to really last
Hopes and dreams that are there,
But somehow not here
Maybe, one day I can reach out
And feel a hand, and it will be you.

Will time ever come our way
Or continue to go as it came,
A little your way, a little mine
Well, the pathway's there
And someday maybe we can follow it,
But as for now the realities are far too real,
Even for us to share.

—Jack Chamblee



drawing by Jeff Jones

The works of Fenwick

HUMOR by Pat Kaetz

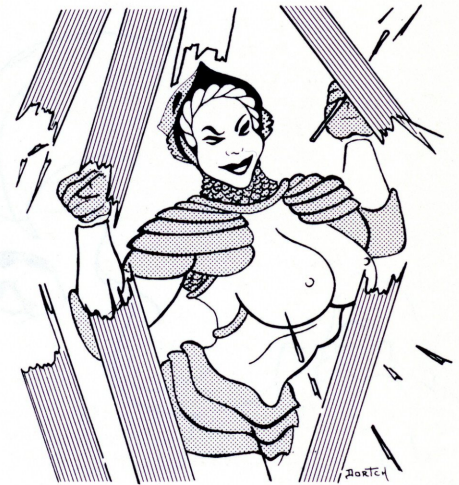
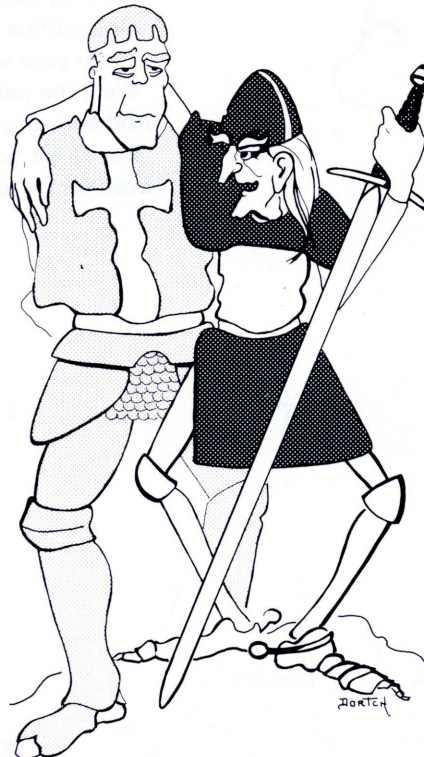
In England recently, an ancient manuscript has been discovered, which throws new light on an obscure seventeenth century writer known to his contemporaries simply as "Fenwick." Fenwick, an almost legendary figure, was said to have been a genteel, polished, and well-educated, though illiterate, poet and dramatist. He led the stormy life of a soldier, courtier, and man-about-town (carriage driver), before he was hanged at the age of thirty-two on charges of plagiarism and touching the Queen, as Chaucer once put it, "in hir toute." Included in the newly discovered manuscript are several character sketches of some of the lesser known members of King Arthur's Round Table, a collection of sonnets, and two epic poems, both dealing with the Arthurian legend.

The Character Sketches

Here are just a few of the sketches included in the manuscript. They have been paraphrased for easier reading, since Fenwick's writings are mainly unintelligible.

Sir Clyde the Obtuse—Probably the least intelligent of Arthur's knights, Sir Clyde was never quite able to figure out why the Round Table was called the Round Table. His most memorable deed was that when sent out by Arthur to search for the Holy Grail, he brought back a chamber pot.

Sir Frederick the Aged—The oldest of the knights of the Round Table, Sir Frederick was eighty-seven when he first joined. He frequently coughed and wheezed so badly at meetings that Arthur found it necessary to stuff old saddlebags down his throat. Occasionally during a sword battle his arms would lock up and he would stand like a rusted wind-



mill for several days until someone rubbed his joints with butter. He was admired by the other knights for being alive.

Sir Susan the Liberated—Sir Susan was the only female member of the Round Table. She stood six feet five inches tall and had the build of a water buffalo, her favorite pastime being to break down solid oak doors with her bosom. Her greatest deed occurred when she killed Grod the Hun by stepping on both his feet and ripping his head off, using his mustache as a handle.

Sir Oswald the Obsequious—Sir Oswald was best known for the fact that he never offended anyone. He accomplished this by never disagreeing,

as shown by this excerpt from Fenwick's epic poem, "Mort and Arthur."

King Arthur: Lancelot, dost thou thinkst we should attack?

Lancelot: Yes, attack!

Oswald: Yes, I agreeest. Attack!

King Arthur: I disagreeeth. We shouldst not attack now, the time is not ripe.

Oswald: Right, King, right! I agreeest. Do not attack!

The knights eventually became quite sick of Sir Oswald, and forced Arthur to ask him this question.

King Arthur: Shouldst I kill thee?

Oswald: Yes, yes, kill me!

King Arthur: So be it!

Oswald: Wait! No!
AAAAAAAAGGHH!!!

Sir Percy the Effeminate—Sir Percy was, as described by Fenwick, "The Knighte with the moste Supple Yriste." It is rumored that Percy had a slight mishap with a lance in his younger days, which probably accounted for his voice and complexion problems. Graceful and quick from many ballet lessons, Sir Percy would probably have been one of Arthur's most adept swordsmen, had he been able to lift a sword. He often borrowed dresses from Guinevere, taking great delight in putting them on and trying to get other knights to hide under them. His greatest feat as a knight of "that cutesy roundy table" (as he put it) was breaking the English record in the mile run after being frightened by a cat.

Sir Winslow the Inebriated—As indicated by his name, Sir Winslow was most often found at the local mead hall, "The Staggering Bore." He usually had to be bodily carried to meetings



of the Round Table, preferring instead to stay at the mead hall and pretend he was a welcome mat. Sir Winslow once retched on Sir Lancelot, causing Arthur to laugh so violently that he choked on a buttered scone.

Sir Mort the Well Dressed—Sir Mort, the lead character in "Mort and Arthur," was the only Jewish member of the Round Table. He introduced bagels and lox to the court, along with button-down helmets and leisure armor. Sir Mort won the Best English Tailor award for five consecutive years in the category of "Most Imaginative Codpiece."

The Sonnets

Among the sonnets in the find is what appears to be a feeble attempt at a sonnet cycle. It is entitled "Astroturf and Fella," and involves a man (Fella) who is concerned with the problem of feeding his horse (Astroturf). There are some particularly moving sonnets in the cycle, such as number twenty-five, a plea for vitamin B-12 supplements, and number ninety-seven, a lament over a lack of sufficient roughage in his horse's diet. (The horse is fed mainly oatmeal and chives.) Here is a sample poem from the cycle, sonnet number thirty-four.

Eat, thoust foole!
Doest thou list¹ to become glue?
Devoure thine oates,
thine rich clover, thine hay.
Or the day thou wast foaled,
thou salt sure rewe;
Chew with a munchyng chomp
and a helthful naye!²
What? Whinnyng and whinyng
thou coose to retch,
And beg me to bring ye
more oatmeal and chives;
I seest thine eyes,
my heart melts and I fetch,
As I have fetched
for all my mortal life.³
Lovely sorrel mare,
this I must confess,
Youre myn favor'd,
though I look'd far and wide;
Although thine back
is shap'd much like an S,
And maynge⁴ doth cover
great parts of thine hide.
The question remains,
as a stench rises foul,



How to ever
regulate thine bowels?⁵

- 1: wish, or possibly "wish"
- 2: neigh. This word has a double meaning, neigh as in "neigh," and neigh as in "From strangers' cars stay away."
- 3: Fenwick was taught by his father at an early age to fetch slippers, as the family was too poor to afford a dog.
- 4: mange. The "mange" has been identified as a form of venereal disease, a problem which also afflicted Fenwick.
- 5: bowels. W.H. Abrams has said that "This line is the most putrid in the English language. It is simply icky."

The Epic Poems

The two epic poems found in the jar may be considered the two most boring literary works in the history of western civilization (with the possible exception of *The Signal Flag and I* by S.S. Broadbeam). The earliest, "Sir Gawain and the Scarlet Lady," is a Christian allegory. In it, Sir Gawain is staying for several days with the Earl of Brassiere. The Earl, a hunting enthusiast, promises to award Gawain the fruits of the hunt for three days, if Gawain promises to give him whatever he "captures" at the castle. The first day, Gawain receives a kiss from the Earl's wife, and in turn kisses the Earl that night. The second day, he receives two kisses from the wife, and he kisses the Earl twice that evening. The third day, the Earl's wife (who easily outweighs Gawain by thirty pounds) rapes Gawain, and he in turn. . . well, you know. The story ends with Gawain marrying the Earl, with Arthur's blessing. Sir Percy the Effeminate commits suicide in a fit of jealousy by breathing deeply in a stable.

The second epic, "Mort and Arthur," is a rollicking adventure story in which Sir Mort the Well Dressed and King Arthur roam the countryside performing honorable deeds and altering trousers. Sir Mort becomes the hero of the story by keeping a dragon interested in a double-breasted blazer long enough for Arthur to sneak up and lop off the hapless reptile's head. Here is a short excerpt from that scene.

Mort—You got him!

K.A.—I got him! Nay, *we* got him!

Mort—We got him!

K.A.—We got him!

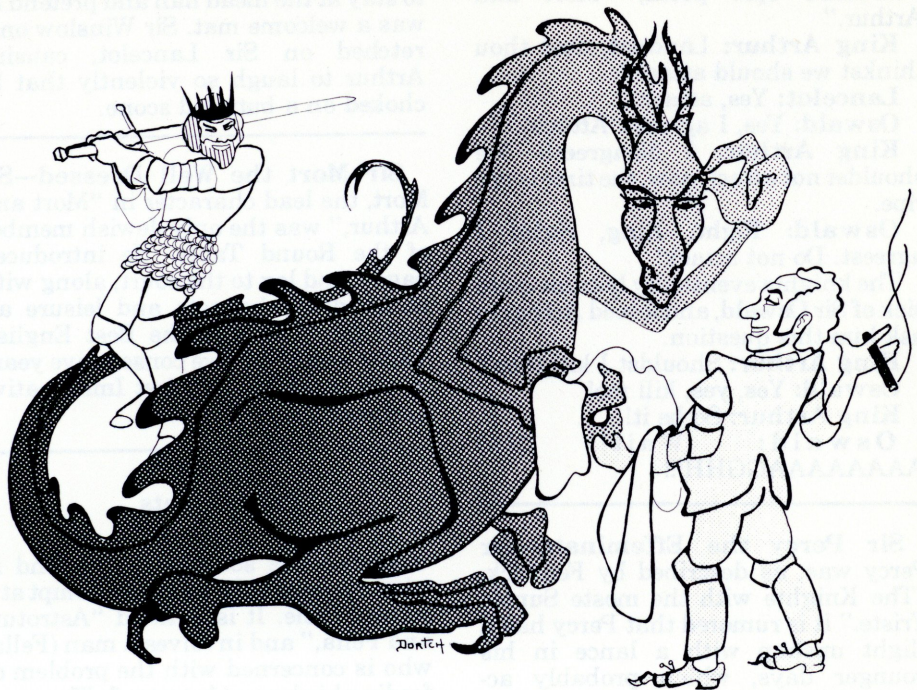
Mort—Atta way to go!

K.A.—We're number one!

Mort—We got him!

This joyous revelry continues for some fifteen pages, ending with both being arrested for R.W.I. (Riding While Intoxicated).

From these samples of his work, it is easy to see why Fenwick is rapidly rising in popularity, particularly among those who read Harlequin Romances. Those in the academic world rank his work somewhere between *Love Story* and *Mechanix Illustrated*.



1

Then only time shall be witness
To the emotions I have laid away,
And Father shall shed tearful minutes
As waste brings death within immortality.

2

Walking in personal tandem,
Beside one's self and being another,
A critical image reflecting soul,
Avenging conscience with eyes that know.

3

Eyes that gleam and laugh, beguile;
I looked deep and there found
the truth that was a lie,
And knew not what to believe—
The heart, the eyes, the questions there;
Love misplaced? Did she care?

4

He asked if it mattered;
Was reason anchored in time?
Should hands extend in love?, in sin?
Or were these withered morals of withered men
Who write the rules that save the souls
And place two careless lovers
In damnation's hands.

5

Idle thoughts expressed in pen
Fluid prose, a poem to write
Finding remedy in creation,
Sanity in exchange for ink.

—Mitchell E. Hamic

OCTOBER SONG

Cooler days come marching in,
Shorter days appear.
Indian summer fades away into
The howling winds of October.

The birds of summer fill the sky
A long journey to a winter home.
Fading green leaves fall and disappear into
The howling winds of October.

Jack 'o Lanterns smile so bright
Faerie goblins fill the night
Witches glide in the autumn moonlight on
The howling winds of October.

—Maurice Snelling

The following pieces of poetry were written during a two month visit to the country of Taiwan. They are my impressions of the culture of the Chinese people. During my visit, I lived with a Chinese family, benefiting from a complete cultural environment.

—Stephanie L. Wolfe

WHAT IS—ISN'T

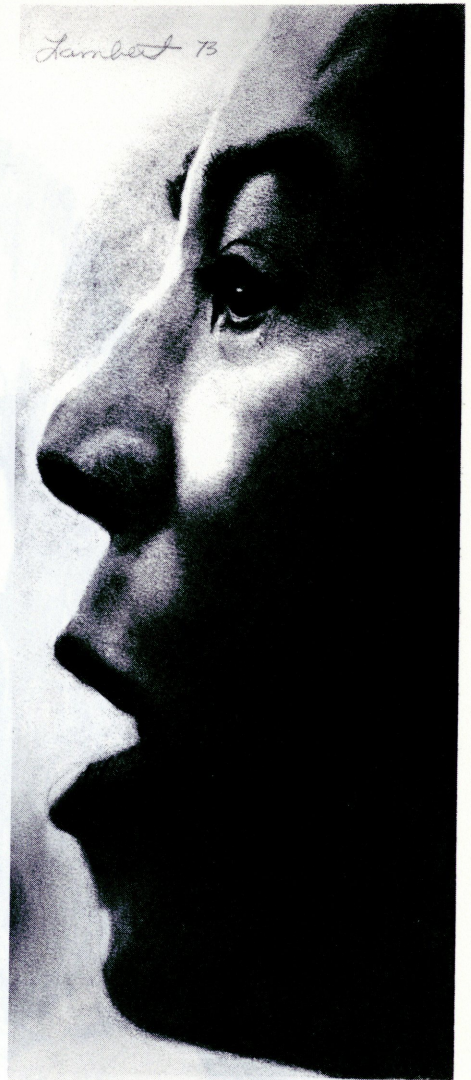
What cost to have what is
right by birth?
To sacrifice virtue-truth-
honor-the mind.
Extended in no way, no manner,
no fashion to behold.
Is freedom really there?

The written word supports the
country's people—
To serve the nation is to
be justly honourable.
The privilege of the people
is to be educated.
To know is one thing; but,
to learn is another.

OLD WORLD VS NEW

China—The old man with new
toys, or new ways...
The U.S.—A child who delights in
finding fantasy.
Could it be described better, as saying
China looks to the old?
Or, that the U.S. glorifies in
worshipping the young?
The old have all the answers
in China.
The young are fresh and full of
new ideas in the U.S.
All respect is given to the old,
and ancestors are protected.
We place our old in nursing homes—
“for their own good.”
The old gentleman does what he
darn well pleases.
“What does that old man think he’s
doing anyway?”
Oldage is something to cherish,
to look forward to.
“I hope I never grow old; it will
be horrid then!”
The elderly have the last word
in any family discussion.
“You are only as old as you feel!”
“She doesn’t think clearly—too old!”

—Stephanie L. Wolfe



drawing by Mike Lambert

RECOLLECTIONS AT DAWN

Sunshine in the morning —
Like dawn oozing out from behind
A curtain of moonbeams —
Gracefully frames
The set.
Where lovers
Must quietly whisper their promises
Until the velvet folds of midnight return
And slowly unravel for us
The entangled plots
Our dreams
Must so faithfully follow.

—Linda McKnight





jack mountain

Wearied by the sultry nights and days of an unending summer, the old man huddled in the shade to survive the ravaging September sun and shivered in anticipation of a winter equally fierce—until October nineteen hundred and seventy-seven *anno Domini* burst upon him with a riot of color that created and fed an insatiable appetite for unparalleled splendor so that he roamed mountain and valley ceaselessly as unmindful of yesterday and tomorrow as a youth fired with the passion of spring and procreation.

And, under the influence of the variable October sky—flushed now with the yellow mist of a golden sun which burnished the variegated leaves to an ineffable brilliance and muted then by a grey mist which clung to the flaming trees and was warmed thereby to rise aloft in soft clouds hovering over a landscape undulating and damasked—, he achieved at last a measure of the reconciliation and a modicum of the wisdom that had eluded him through the vacillations and vexations of all his troubled years on earth.

Thus, when October fled the Deep South on the wings of a brisk breeze which enveloped him in a golden shower of fluttering heart shapes through which he could still espy far and near purple, lavender, dark crimson, flaming red, and deep green, he knelt by the gnarled redbud and sent upward a silent, earnest petition that every child of future generations ordained to follow his tortured tortuous path might find in the end the peace and fulfillment which he had attained through the incomparable beauty of October nineteen hundred and seventy-seven *anno Domini*.

Contributors

Leslie Blackmon, sophisticated and learned assistant editor, is a junior majoring in English. She plans to attend law school, preferably Georgetown University, where she hopes to meet a dashing young senator with whom she will have a meaningful, if not lasting, relationship. Her hobbies are finger-nail biting and demolishing the chairs in the *Circle* office.

Janet Daly graduates this quarter after completing an internship with the *Alumnews*. She had to hunt down all the Republican candidates — which, at press time, totalled one.

Cynthia Dodd is an English major who dabbles in theater and journalism.

Brice Dortch gave up a conservative math major two years ago and took up the bohemian lifestyle of an artist — donning sandals, growing a moustache, and adapting a nocturnal living schedule. He plans a career in visual arts.

Jonathan Hughes is an avid poet and film enthusiast. Jon's *Pony* in this issue is a trailblazer for *The Circle*.

Madison Jones, Auburn writer-in-residence, and a recent addition to *The Circle's* editorial board, published his sixth novel this spring. Called *Passage Through Gehenna*, it is the first novel ever published by the LSU Press. He has sold the movie rights to two books: *An Exile* (made into the film *I Walk the Line*), and *A Cry of Absence*, which made the front page of the *New York Times Book Review*.

Pat Kaetz, A junior in English, Pat is becoming a frequent contributor to *The Circle*, and well he should, because his satire is hilarious.

Wanda Kenton, Energetic student editorial board member, Wanda demonstrates her considerable photographic skills in a photo essay inside. Wanda is a junior in journalism.

James Locke, A member of *The Circle's* editorial board, James is a junior majoring in philosophy. He hopes to pursue a law career and is particularly interested in international affairs. He is vice-president of the Council of International Relations and United Nations Affairs.

Mickey Logue brings considerable journalistic expertise to his new position on the *Circle* editorial board. Before becoming a journalism professor, he was on the staffs of the *Atlanta Constitution*, *Montgomery Advertiser*, and *Birmingham News*. In 1975, he served as visiting assistant editor of the prestigious *Chronicle of Higher Education*.

Kaye Lovvorn, the one and only original *Circle* faculty advisor, was Auburn's first journalism graduate in 1964. In her spare time she studies Auburn's new accounting procedures.

Pat McArthur, who interviewed Albert Brewer for this issue, looks like Sophia Loren with golden blonde hair, which should prove helpful in her chosen career as a sportswriter. Pat, currently doing a journalism internship with the *Alumnews*, will graduate in March.

Mala Paulk, Member of the *Circle* editorial board, Mala is a junior majoring in English. She enjoys writing — particularly about small southern towns. A long-time "Fitzgerald freak," she gives a personal report of the life of Scottie Fitzgerald.

Gerald Pouncey is a freshman majoring in engineering, but planning a career in law. A former track runner, he incorporates this background into his article on Bruce Jenner.

Jerry Roden, a faculty member of the *Circle* editorial board, was editor of *The Auburn Alumnews* from 1957 to 1965. He is now busy planning the publication of a new magazine.

Richard Schneider is a senior majoring in English who plans to attend law school. In addition to writing, he enjoys composing songs for guitar. He has just recently had some of his poetry accepted for publication in *Variations*, a California magazine.

Sharon Stacey interviewed Fob James. A senior majoring in accounting, she is skilled in the use of numbers as well as words.

Ken Taylor is a junior in journalism and has been published in the *Circle* before. He uses his job with the Coliseum stage crew to give some interesting insights to behind-the-scenes action.

Dee Voyles, a graduate student in math education, brings considerable experience in writing and publication to her position on the *Circle* editorial board. She is expecting her first child just in time for the spring issue.

Charlotte Ward, an associate professor of physics, is a faculty member of the *Circle* editorial board. Believing that "every community needs its own colorful character to make things more interesting," she bikes to class, even in freezing weather, and refuses to buy a car. She contributes to various scientific journals and has written a physical textbook for college students, *This Blue Planet*.

Mark Winne, editor, is a junior majoring in journalism. So clever, crafty, and cynical is he (as evidenced by his nickname "Witty Winne") that I — the banal and dull assistant editor — find it impossible to do him credit with but five minutes to complete this biographical synopsis.